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THE

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Wherein is ſhewed,

I. The Worth and Excellency of the Soul.

II. The Divinity and Incarnation of our Saviour.

III. The Authority of the Holy Scripture.

IV. The Obligation of the People to read the Scripture.

V. A Diſſuaſive from Apoſtacy.

VOL. V. and Laſt.

By JOHN SCOTT, *D. D. late Rector of* St. Giles in the Fields.

The EIGHTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN BEECROFT, at the *Bible* and *Crown* in *Paternoſter Row*, MDCCLVII.

To the Honourable

SUSANNA NOEL,

(Mother to the Right Honourable *Baptiſt* Earl of *Gainsborugh)*

THIS laſt Volume of the Work of my dear deceaſed Friend, the Reverend Dr. Scott, *is humbly and gratefully dedicated, by*

Her Honour's

Moſt obliged,

And moſt devoted Servant,

Humphrey Zouch.

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OF THE

Christian Life.

VOL. V.

MATT. xvi. 26.

What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?

IN the 24th Verse our *Saviour* urges his Disciples to that necessary Duty of *denying themselves*, that is, of surrendering up their Wills to the Conduct of his, and renouncing all their *worldly* Interest when it comes in Competition with their Duty, and of taking up their Cross, and following him; that is, of preparing themselves to endure Persecution for his sake, and to persist courageously in the Profession and Practice of his *Religion*, whatsoever Oppositions they should meet with from the World. And to press them hereunto, he urges this Argument, *ver.* 25. *For whosoever will save his Life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his Life, shall find it.* Where the *Greek* Word ψυχὴν, which we render *Life*, may perhaps be better rendered *Himself*, it being *familiar* both with *Hebrews* and *Syrians* to call a Man's Life and Soul *Himself*; so the Psalmist, *Thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is thou shalt

not leave me perishing in my Grave, *Psalm* xvi. 10; and *Leviticus* xx. 25. *Ye shall not make your Souls abominable*, i. e. yourselves; and that it should be so rendered here is evident, because St. *Luke* so expounds it, *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World and lose himself, or be cast away?* Luke ix. 25. And indeed the Soul being the *principal* Part of a Man, and that which advances him into a *Species* of Being above that of a *mere* Animal, may very well be called *himself*, according to that of *Hierocles*, σὺ γὰρ εἶ ἡ ψυχὴ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα σόν, τὰ δὲ ἐκτὸς τοῦ σωματος. *Thy Soul is Thee, thy Body Thine, and thy outward Goods thy Body's.* And if instead of Life we render ψυχὴ *Himself*, the Words will be very *plain* and *easy*; for whosoever will save himself by renouncing me and my *Religion*, shall lose himself for ever; and whosoever will be content to lose himself for my sake, shall save himself for ever. And this he farther enforces in the Text, *What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* that is, what will it *avail* Man to *gain* the whole World, if he *for ever* ruin himself by it? And when he hath thus *ruined* himself, what would he give, if it were in his power, to save and recover himself again? The Words thus explained, I shall resolve the Sense of them into these five Propositions.

I. That a Man, or the Soul of a Man is a Thing of *inestimable* Price and Value; for our *Saviour* here weighs it against the whole World, that is, against all the *Pleasures*, *Profits*, and *Honours* that this *inferior* World can afford; and

and declares, that in the *juſt* Balance of his Eſteem it out-weighs them all. And certainly that muſt needs be *exceeding precious*, whoſe Worth the whole World cannot *counterpoiſe*.

II. That this *precious* Soul may be loſt. This our *Saviour* plainly ſuppoſes in theſe Words, *if he loſe his own Soul.*

III. That our *renouncing* of *Chriſt* and his *Religion* will moſt certainly infer this Loſs. For theſe Words, as I have ſhewed you, our *Saviour* urges as an Argument to diſſuade Men from *Apoſtacy*; but if without *loſing* our Souls, we might *renounce* him, and *apoſtatize* from him, there would be no *Force* in all this Argument to diſſuade us from it.

IV. That when this Soul is *loſt*, 'tis *loſt* irrecoverably. *What ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* where the *Greek* Word ἀντάλλαγμα, which we render *Exchange*, is uſed in the ſame Senſe with ἄξιλασμα, which ſignifies a Price of Redemption, denoting, that if a Man ſhould or could give never ſo much to buy his Soul from Perdition, yet no *Price* of Redemption will be *taken* for it.

V. That this *irrecoverable* Loſs of a Soul is of ſuch a *vaſt* Moment, that the Gain of the whole World is not *ſufficient* to compenſate it. *What is a Man profited*, that is, he is not at all *profited*, nay he is ſo far from *that* that he is a *vaſt* Loſer.

I. That the Soul of a Man is a Thing of an *ineſtimable* Price and Value. And for the Proof of this Propoſition, I ſhall endeavour theſe *two* Things.

Firſt, To repreſent to you of what *vaſt* Worth it is in reſpect of its own *natural* Capacities.

Secondly, To ſhew you of what *vaſt* Eſteem it is in the Judgment of all thoſe who, as we muſt needs ſuppoſe, do beſt *underſtand* the Worth of it.

1. I ſhall endeavour to repreſent to you of what *vaſt* Worth it is in reſpect of its own *natural* Capacities, particulary in theſe *four*. (1.) In reſpect of its Capacity of *Underſtanding*. (2.) Of *Moral Perfection*. (3.) Of *Pleaſure* and *Delight*. (4.) Of *Immortality*.

1. The Soul of Man is of *vaſt* Worth in reſpect of its Capacity of *Underſtanding*. For certainly to *underſtand*, is the *greateſt* and *nobleſt* Operation that a Being is *capable* of; for it is this that gives Beauty and Excellence to all our *other* Operations, whether they be *natural* or *moral*: 'Tis this that propoſes the *Ends*, and directs the Courſe, and preſcribes the Meaſures of all our *other* Actions; and though we had never ſo much *Force* or *Power*, yet unleſs we had *Underſtanding* to guide and manage it, it would be altogether inſignificant. For *blind* Power acts at random, and if we had the Force of a *Whirlwind*, yet without a *Mind* to ſteer and manage it, it would be an *equal* Chance whether we did *well* or *ill* with it. So that unleſs there were ſome *Underſtanding*, either *within* or *without* us to conduct our *active Powers*, and determine them to our *Good*, we were as good be altogether without them; becauſe while they act by *Chance*, it is at leaſt an *equal* Lay whether they will *injure* or *advantage* us. Since therefore *Underſtanding* is the *Rule* and

and *Meaſure* of all our *other* Powers, it neceſſarily follows that *itſelf* is the *greateſt* and *nobleſt* of them all. What an *excellent* Being therefore muſt a Soul be, in which this *great* and *ſovereign* Power reſides? A *Power*, that can collect into itſelf ſuch *prodigious* Numbers of *ſimple Apprehenſions*, and by comparing *one* with the *other*, can connect them into *true* Propoſitions, and upon *each* of theſe can run ſuch *long* and *curious* Deſcants of Diſcourſe, till it hath drawn out all their Conſequents into a Chain of wiſe and *coherent* Notions, and ſorted theſe into ſuch *various Syſtems* of *uſeful* Arts and Sciences; that can diſcern the *harmonious* Contextures of Truths with Truths, the *ſecret* Links and Junctures of *coherent* Notions, trace up *Effects* to their *Cauſes*, and ſift the *remoteſt* Conſequents to their *natural* Principles; that can caſt *abroad* its *ſharp-ſighted* Thoughts over the whole *Extent* of Beings, and, like the *Sun* with its *out-ſtretched* Rays, reach the *remoteſt* Objects; that can in the *Twinkling of an Eye* expatiate through all the *Univerſe*, and keep *Correſpondence* with *both* Worlds; can prick out the Paths of the *heavenly* Bodies, and meaſure the Circles of their Motion, ſpan the whole *Surface* of the Earth, and dive into its *capacious* Womb, and there diſcover the *numerous* Offſprings with which it is continually teeming; that can ſail into the World of *Spirits* by the *never-varying* Compaſs of its *Reaſon*, and diſcover thoſe *inviſible* Regions of *Happineſs* and *Miſery*, which are altogether out of our Sight whilſt we ſtand upon this *hither* Shore: In a Word, That can aſcend from Cauſe to Cauſe, to *God* who is the *Cauſe* of all, and with its

Eagle-Eyes can gaze upon that *glorious* Sun, and dive into the *infinite Abyſs* of his *divine* Perfections. What an *excellent* Being therefore is that *Soul* that is endowed with ſuch a *vaſt* Capacity of *Underſtanding*, and with its *piercing* Eye can reach ſuch an *immenſe* Compaſs of Beings, and travel through ſo *vaſt* an *Horizon* of Truth? Doubtleſs, if *human* Souls had no *other* Capacity to *value* themſelves by, but only this, *this* were enough to give them *Pre-eminence* over all *inferior* Beings, and *render* them the moſt *glorious* Part of all this *ſublunary* World.

2. The *Soul* of Man is of *vaſt* Worth in reſpect of its Capacity of *Moral Perfection*. For by the Exerciſe of thoſe *human Virtues* which are *proper* to it in this State of Conjunction with the Body, it is capable of raiſing itſelf to the *Perfection* of thoſe *angelical* Natures, which of all Creatures do moſt nearly *approach* and *reſemble* the *great* Creator, and *Fountain* of all *Perfection*. For by keeping a *due* Reſtraint upon its bodily Appetites, and thereby gradually weaning itſelf from the *Pleaſures* of the *Body*, it may by degrees be *educated* and *trained* up to lead the Life, and reliſh the Joys of *naked* and *immortal* Spirits; it may be contempered to an *incorporeal* State, ſo as to be able to enjoy itſelf without *eating* and *drinking*, and live moſt happily upon the *Fare* of *Angels*, upon *Wiſdom* and *Holineſs*, and *Love* and *Contemplation*. And then by governing its *own* Will and Affections by the Laws of *Reaſon* and *Religion*, it may by degrees improve itſelf ſo far in all theſe *Moral* Endowments, which are the *proper* Graces of every *reaſonable* Nature, as to be at laſt as *perfectly wiſe*

wiſe and *reaſonable* in its own *Choices* and *Refuſals*, in its *Love* and *Hatred*, in its *Deſires* and *Delights*, as the *Angels* themſelves are. For though it cannot be expected that in this *imperfect* State a *Soul* ſhould arrive to ſuch a Pitch as this, yet even now it may be *growing* up and *aſpiring* to it; which, if it doth, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, when *this* is *expired*, it hath *another* Life to live, which being antecedently prepared for by thoſe *ſpiritual* Improvements it hath made *here*, will furniſh it with Opportunities of *improving* infinitely faſter than *here* he did, or poſſibly could. For in that *Life* it ſhall not only be *freed* from thoſe many Incumbrances which do *here* retard it in its *ſpiritual* Progreſs, nor ſhall it only be aſſociated with a World of *pure* and *bleſſed* Spirits, whoſe *holy* Example and *wiſe* Converſe will doubtleſs wonderfully edify and improve it; but be alſo admitted into a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *God*, who is the *Author* and Pattern of all Perfection; the Sight of whoſe *raviſhing* Beauty will *inflame* it with a moſt *ardent* Love to him, and *excite* it to a moſt *vigorous* Imitation of him: All which conſidered, it is not to be imagined how much the State of *Heaven* will immediately *improve* thoſe *happy* Souls that are prepared and diſpoſed for it. But then conſidering that *Moral Perfection* is as *infinite* as the *Nature* of *God*, in which there is an *Infinity* of *Holineſs*, and *Juſtice*, and *Goodneſs*, within this *boundleſs* Subject, there will be room enough for Souls to make *farther* and *farther* Improvements in,

even to *Eternity*. And then when they ſhall ſtill be growing on ſo faſt, and yet be ſtill *for ever* improving, to what a *tranſcendent* Height of *Glory* and *Perfection* will they at laſt arrive? For though no *finite* Soul can *ever* arrive to an *infinite* Perfection, yet ſtill it may be growing on to it, becauſe there will ſtill be *poſſible* Degrees of it beyond its *preſent* Attainments; and when it is arrived to the fartheſt *imaginable* Degree, yet ſtill it will be *capable* of farther, and ſo farther and farther to all *Eternity*. And if ſo, *O bleſſed God*, of what a *capacious* Nature haſt thou made theſe *Souls* of ours, which though they will doubtleſs *improve* in *Goodneſs* as faſt in the *other Life* as is poſſible for them, with all the Advantages of a *Heavenly* State, yet will never attain to an *utmoſt Period*, but ſtill be growing *perfecter* and *perfecter for ever*.

3. The Soul of *Man* is of *vaſt* Worth in Reſpect of its *immenſe* Capacities of *Pleaſure* and *Delight*: For its Capacity of *Pleaſure* muſt neceſſarily be as *large* and *extenſive*, as its Capacity of *Underſtanding*, and of *Moral Perfection*; becauſe the *proper* Pleaſure of a Soul reſults from its own *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs*, from its *farther* Diſcoveries of *Truth*, and *farther* Proficiency in *inward* Rectitude and Virtue, and conſequently as it improves *farther* and *farther* in *Underſtanding* and in *Moral Perfection*, it muſt ſtill gather *more* and *more* Fuel to *feed* and *encreaſe* its *own* Joy and Pleaſure. For the Pleaſure of every Being conſiſts in the *vigorous* Exerciſe of its Faculties about

convenient

convenient and *agreeable* Objects; but the *Faculties* of a Soul are *Underſtanding* and *Will*, to which the only *agreeable* Objects are *Truth* and *Goodneſs*; and therefore the more *Truth* there is in the *Mind*, and the more *Goodneſs* there is in the *Will*, the more vigorouſly will they *employ* and *exerciſe* themſelves about them, and conſequently the more they will be *pleaſed* and *raviſhed*. Since therefore, every *new* Diſcovery of *Truth*, and every *new* Degree of *Goodneſs*, gives *new* Life to our *Minds* and *Wills*, and renders both more *ſprightly* and *vigorous*, it hence neceſſarily follows, that our Souls are capable of as much *Pleaſure* as they are of *Truth* and *Goodneſs*; and how vaſtly *capable* they are of both theſe I have already ſhewed you. So that it is not to be imagined by us, who have here ſo *little* Experience, what *Heavens* of Joy a Soul is *capable* of; only at preſent we find by Experience, that the more we improve in *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs*, the more *pleaſant* and *chearful* we find and feel *ourſelves*, and that our *Faculties* ſtill grow more *active* and *lightſome* the more we diſburden them of that *Ignorance* and *Sin* that *clogs* and *incumbers* them. And upon *great* Proficiencies in *Knowledge* and *Virtue* we find a *ſtrange* Alacrity within ourſelves; we are as it were in *Heaven* upon *Earth*, and do feel a *Paradiſe* ſpringing up within us, the *Fragrance* of whoſe *Joys* grows many times ſo *ſtrong*, that our *frail* Mortality can hardly bear them. When therefore ſuch *Souls* do caſt *off* this Mortality, which now doth only fetter and intangle them, and have made their Entrance into the *inviſible* Regions

of

of *Bleſſedneſs*, how *ſprightly* and *active*, how *lightſome* and *chearful* will they feel themſelves? For in the *firſt Moment* of their Admiſſion, all that *Miſt* of *erroneous* Prejudice, which now interrupts their Proſpect of *Truth*, and all thoſe Remains of *irregular* Affection, that check and diſtract them in their Choice of *Goodneſs*, will be *for ever* chaſed from their *Minds* and *Wills* by the *clear* Light of the *heavenly State*; and their Faculties having diſburthened themſelves, and ſhaken *off* every Clog, with what *unſpeakable* Vigour will they *move* and *act*, eſpecially in the Preſence of ſuch *ſuitable* Objects as the *heavenly State* will preſent before them? When *infinite Truth*, and *infinite Goodneſs* ſhall be always preſent to their *free* Minds and undiſtracted Wills, and nothing ſhall *interpoſe* to hinder them either in ſeeing the *one*, or in chuſing the *other*, here will be Work enough for both to all *Eternity*; and both being freed from all Incumbrance, the *one* will be diſcovering every *Moment* farther and farther into that *infinite Truth* which it loves and admires, and the *other* will be improving every *Moment* more and more in that *infinite Goodneſs* which it chuſes and adores. And then every *new* Diſcovery and *new* Improvement will ſpring *new* Heavens of Joy in the Soul, and by reaſon of thoſe *new* Acqueſts of *Truth* and *Goodneſs*, which we ſhall every *Moment* make, we ſhall every *Moment* be entertained with *new* Pleaſures, and ſo before we have ſpent *one* Joy, *another* will ſucceed, and *another* that, and ſo on *for ever*. For when a *God* of *infinite Truth* and *Goodneſs* becomes the *objective Happineſs* of a *finite*

a *finite* Nature, which cannot comprehend and enjoy him, but in an *infinite* Succeſſion, every *new* Delight the *Enjoyment* of him creates in us muſt neceſſarily raiſe a *new* Deſire, and every *new* Deſire immediately *find* a *new* Delight, and ſo round again to all *Eternity*. Of what a *vaſt* Capacity therefore is this Soul of ours, in which there is room enough *ſucceſſively* to entertain all the *raviſhing* Joys and Pleaſures that make an *everlaſting Heaven*; that can drink in thoſe *deep* Rivers of *Pleaſure* as faſt as they *ſpring* up and *flow* from God's right Hand for evermore? What Tongue can expreſs the *innumerable* Joys that ſuch a Soul can hold, whoſe Capacity is ſo *large* as *Heaven*. and ſo *near* to *infinite*, as to be able to contain all thoſe Joys and Pleaſures that *infinite Truth* and *Goodneſs* can create?

4, and *laſtly*, The Soul of Man is of *vaſt* Worth in reſpect of its Capacity of *Immortality*. For by its Operations it is evident, that the Soul is not compoſed of *corruptible Matter*, but is a *ſpiritual* and *immaterial* Subſtance; for if it were *Matter*, it would *act* and *move* only when *other* Matter preſſes upon it, and not be able to determine the Courſe of its *own* Motion, but would be forced to move *backwards* or *forwards* according as it was *thruſt* on by that *outward* Matter that continually moves and preſſes upon it, and all its Motions would be as *neceſſary* as that of a Stone in the *Air*, when it is thruſt up by an *impreſſed* Force, and *preſſed* down again by the Weight of the *Air* above it: Whereas in this

Soul

Soul of ours we sensibly *feel* and *experience* a *natural* Liberty of acting, a Power to move itself, and to determine its *own* Motions which way it pleaseth; when it is pressed *forward* never so vigorously by the *strong* Impulses of *outward* Objects, it is in its Power to *go on* or *retreat*, and to *divert* the Current of its Thoughts into a quite *contrary* Channel to that whereinto it is thrust and directed by all the Impressions of its Sense. For thus in the midst of the *Alarms* and *Shoutings* of an *Army*, of the *Noises* of Drums and Trumpets ringing in our Ears, our Soul can recollect itself, and reduce its *scattered* Thoughts into *profound* Contemplations of a *sweet* and *blessed* Peace; and when it is *pressed* from *without* with never so much Importunity to *this* or *that particular* Choice, it is in its power to *reject* the Motion, and to *chuse* the quite contrary: By all which it is *apparent*, that the Soul hath an *innate* Liberty of *acting*, that *she* is not *necessitated* from *without* by the *different* Concourses and Motions of the *several* Particles of Matter; but that all the Diversity of her *Wills* and *Opinions* is principally owing to her *own Freedom* and *Power* of Self-Determination, and to make the *least* Doubt of it, is to question the *common* Sense and Experience of Mankind. Since therefore the Soul is not determined in its Motions by the different *Pressures* of *material* Things, as all *other* Matter is, but hath Power to *swim* against the *Torrent*, and *move* quite counter to all *foreign* Impressions, it hence necessarily follows, that it is *immaterial*. And indeed, considering

conſidering how much its *Operations* do exceed the *utmoſt* Power of *dull* and *paſſive* Matter, I cannot but wonder that any Man ſhould be ſo *forſaken* of his *Reaſon*, as to rank it among *material* Things; for how is it *poſſible* that a *Piece* of *dull unactive Matter*, that a *little* Graſs or Dirt, or Mire, after all the *Refinings*, *Macerations*, and *Maturations*, that can be *performed* by the Help of *Motion*, ſhould ever be able to make a *thinking* Being, or grow *up* into the Soul of a *Philoſopher?* That a Company of *dead Atoms*, which cannot move unleſs they are moved, can ever be *capable* of framing *Syllogiſms* in *Mode* and *Figure*, and diſputing, *pro* and *con*, whether they are *Atoms* or no? That ſuch *inert* and *ſluggiſh* Bodies ſhould by their *impetuous* joſtling together awaken *one another* out of their *ſenſeleſs* Paſſiveneſs, and make *each other* hear and feel their *mutual* Knockings and Joſtlings, and then from this *Senſe* into which they have thus awakened *one another*, and (which they are as *incapable* of as a *muſical Inſtrument* is of hearing its *own* Sounds, or taking pleaſure in the *harmonious* Airs that are played upon it) ſhould proceed and conſult together to make *wiſe* Laws, and contrive the *beſt Models* of *Government*; to inveſtigate the Nature of *Things*, and deduce from them the *ſeveral Syſtems* of *Arts* and *Sciences*; in a Word, how is it *poſſible* that a Company of *fluid* Motes and Particles of *Matter* ſhould ever be ſo artificially *complicated* and *twiſted* one with another, as to form an *Underſtanding*

ing that can *lift* up its Eyes, and look beyond all this *ſenſible* World into that of *immaterial* Beings, and conceive *abſtracted Notions* of Things which can never be *Objects* to any *material* Senſes; ſuch as a *pure* Point, *Equality* and *Proportions*, *Symmetry*, and *Aſymmetry* of *Magnitudes*, the *Riſe* and *Propagation* of *Dimenſions*, *infinite Diviſibility*, and the *like* Notions that never were in *Matter*, nor conſequently could ever be extracted out of it: That can correct the *Errors* of all our *material* Perceptions, and demonſtrate Things to be vaſtly different from what they apprehend and report them; can *prove* the *Sun*, for inſtance, to be *one hundred* and *ſixty* times *bigger* than the *Earth*, when to our Eye and Imagination it appears no *bigger* than a Buſhel; that can lodge *within* itſelf all that *Maſs* of *ſenſible* Things which taketh up ſo much Room *without* it, and when it hath piled them *up* upon *one another* in *vaſt* and moſt *prodigious* Numbers, is ſtill as *capacious* of more, as when it was altogether *empty*; in a Word, that can graſp the *Univerſe* with a *Thought*, and comprehend the *whole* Latitude of *Heaven* and *Earth* within its *own indiviſible* Centre; how *ſenſeleſs* is it to imagine that ſuch *noble* Operations as theſe can be performed by a *mere* Complex of *dead Atoms* and *ſenſeleſs* Particles of Matter? And if they cannot, as doubtleſs they cannot, then from hence it will neceſſarily follow, that the Soul of Man is an *immaterial* Thing. Furthermore we ſee, that though the Soul takes in *Objects* of all *ſizes*, yet when once they

they are *in*, they are not as *Bodies* in a *material* Place, in which the *Greater* take up more Room than the *Leſs:* For the *Thought* of a *Mile*, or ten thouſand Miles, doth no more *fill* or *ſtretch* a *Soul*, than that of a *Foot* or an *Inch*, or a *Mathematical Point*; and whereas all *Matter* hath its *Parts*, and thoſe extended *one* without *another* into *Length* and *Breadth* and *Thickneſs*, and ſo is *meaſurable* by *Inches*, *Yards*, or *ſolid Meaſures*; there is no ſuch thing as *meaſurable* Extenſion in any thing belonging to the Soul. For in *Cogitation*, which is the *Eſſence* of a Soul, there is neither *Length*, nor *Breadth*, nor *Thickneſs*, nor is it *poſſible* to have any *Conceit* of a *Foot* of Thought, or a *Yard* of Reaſon, a *Pound* of Wiſdom, or a *Quart* of Virtue. And if what belongs to a Soul be *immaterial*, it will neceſſarily follow that the Soul itſelf is *immaterial* too, and as ſuch *capable* of *Immortality*. For *immaterial* Natures being *pure* and *ſimple*, having neither *contrary* Qualities nor *diviſible* Parts in them, as *material* Things have, can have no Principles of *Alteration* and *Corruption* in them; and being *devoid* of theſe, they muſt needs be *capable* of *living* and *ſubſiſting for ever*. What *noble* Beings therefore are the Souls of Men, which, together with thoſe *vaſt* Capacities of *Underſtanding*, of *Moral Perfection*, of *Joy* and *Pleaſure*, are naturally *capable* of *Immortality*, and conſequently of *improving* in *Knowledge*, in *Goodneſs*, and in *Joy* and *Pleaſure*, unto all *Eternity!* And therefore certainly a Soul muſt needs be a moſt *precious* Thing, that can thus *outlive all ſublunary*

lunary Beings, and *ſubſiſt for ever* in ſo *ſublime* a State of *Glory* and *Beatitude.*

Having thus ſhewn you the *invaluable* Worth of the Soul, in reſpect of its *own natural* Capacities, I proceed,

2. To ſhew you of what *vaſt* Eſteem it is in the Judgment of all thoſe who we muſt needs ſuppoſe to beſt underſtand the *Worth* of it, and that is the *whole* World of *Spirits.* For to be ſure *Spirits* muſt *beſt* underſtand the Excellency of *Spirits*, becauſe they have a *clearer* Inſight into *each* others Natures, and a more *immediate* Proſpect of the *Virtue*, *Power* and *Excellency*, of *each* others *Faculties.* For as for us, whilſt we are in this *imbodied* State, and do underſtand by *corporeal* Organs, we generally judge of the *Worth* and *Excellency* of Things by the Impreſſion they make upon our Senſes; and as theſe are *more* or *leſs* gratified and affected with them, we ſet a *higher* or *lower* Value upon them. Since therefore *Spirits* are a *ſort* of *Beings* that cannot touch or affect our *Bodily* Senſes, it is impoſſible we ſhould be competent Judges of the *true* Worth and Value of them; and therefore in this Matter we ought to be guided by the Judgment of *Spirits*, who muſt needs be *ſuppoſed* to have a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *one another's* Natures. And if we will be guided by theſe, we ſhall find the *whole* World of *Spirits*, even from the *higheſt* to the *loweſt*, unanimouſly *rating* the Souls of Men at an *ineſtimable* Price and Value. And to make this appear, I ſhall ſhew you the *vaſt* Price there is ſet upon them;

1.

1. By *God* the *Father*.
2. By *God* the Son.
3. By *God* the *Holy Ghoſt*.
4. By the *Holy Angels*.
5. By the *Devils*.

1. Let us conſider the *vaſt* Price which *God the Father* hath ſet upon Souls. For when he intended to form theſe *noble* Beings, and tranſmit them into *terreſtrial* Bodies, that ſo being compounded with a *ſenſitive* Nature they might claſp the *ſpiritual* and *animal* Worlds together; he being ſenſible of the *vaſt* Hazards and *infinite* Snares they would be *expoſed* to, was ſo deeply concerned for their Preſervation, that he thought nothing *too dear* to ſave and ſecure them. And *fore-ſeeing* their Fall from that *terreſtrial* Happineſs which he *originally* deſigned them, notwithſtanding the *liberal* Care he had taken to preſerve them in the *State* of *Innocence*, he deſigned to remove the *Scene* of their Happineſs from *Earth* to *Heaven*, being reſolved, if poſſible, to repair the Loſs of a *terreſtrial* with a *celeſtial* Paradiſe. For which end, inſtead of the *Covenant of Innocence*, the *Bleſſings* whereof by their *Sin* they had *for ever* forfeited, he introduces the *Covenant* of *Repentance*, that ſo by the help of this Plank after their *general* Shipwreck, they might be preſerved, and go ſafe to the *Shore* of a *happy* Eternity. And that by this *Covenant* he might the more effectually recover them, he deſigned to grant it to them in ſuch a Way, and upon ſuch a *wiſe* and *weighty* Conſideration, as might at once affect them with the *greateſt* Senſe of his *Love*, and the *deepeſt* Awe of his *Severity*; that

so whilst by the *former* he *allured*, by the *latter* he might *terrify* to Repentance: To which *end* he determined not to grant it to them upon any *other* Consideration than that of *another*'s suffering for them, and *undergoing* the Punishment of their Sin in their stead; that so whilst he shewed his *Love* to them in admitting *another* to *suffer* for them, he might express his *Hatred* to their Sin in not pardoning it without another's suffering. And that he might manifest *this* his *Love* to them, and *this* his *Hatred* to their *Sin* in the *highest* Degree, as he admitted *another* to *suffer* for us, so he resolved to accept no *meaner* Suffering than that of his *own beloved* Son. And that *this* his *Suffering* might be the more *effectual*, he *proposed* to send him down to us into this *lower* World *cloathed* in our Natures, that so he might not only the more familiarly *instruct* us by his *Doctrine* and *Example*, but the more exactly *personate* us in *undergoing* the Punishment of our Sin; and upon his undertaking to undergo it, the most *Merciful* Father agreed to this *Covenant* of *Mercy*, by which he obliged himself to receive us into his Favour upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, and *impowered* his Son to govern us according to the Tenour of it, that is, to *crown* us with the *Rewards* of it if we repented, and *inflict* on us the *Punishments* of it, if we went on in our Impenitence. And that there might be nothing wanting to render this Government of his Son *successful* and us *obedient* to it, he also agreed upon *this* his *mighty* Undertaking to *substitute* to him the *Holy Ghost* to be the *supreme* Minister of his Government, that so by the *Agency* of this *vicarious*

vicarious Power, he might *bow* and *incline* the Hearts of Men to ſubmit unto him, and comply with the Terms of this *merciful* Covenant in which their *everlaſting* Welfare is ſo abundantly provided for.

This is the *mighty* Project, which, for the ſake of the Souls of Men, the Father of *Spirits* hath contrived, and upon which he hath acted and proceeded even from their *firſt* Fall to this very *Moment:* And by this he hath moſt plainly *expreſſed* the *high* and great Veneration that he hath of them; for doubtleſs had they not been exceeding *precious* in his Eyes, he would never have thought it worth the while to project and act ſuch *mighty* Things to redeem and ſave them: He would rather have left them to their *own* Fate, and not have concerned himſelf about them, or not have concerned himſelf to that Degree as to make them the *Subjects* of ſuch a *vaſt* Deſign. For all *wiſe* Agents meaſure their Deſigns by the *Worth* and *Value* of the Things they aim at, and do never lay *great* Projects for the ſake of *little* Trifles; and unleſs *God* had a *mighty* Value for the Souls of Men, his making ſuch vaſt Preparations to ſave them, would be like that *fooliſh* Emperor's raiſing a *numerous* Army, only to go and gather Cockle-Shells.

2. Let us conſider the *vaſt* Price which *God the Son* hath ſet upon Souls; for it is plain he valued them at that *mighty* Rate, as that for their ſakes he willingly undertook to execute this *vaſt* Deſign of his *Father*, and that to ſave theſe *precious* Beings he thought it would be very well worth his while to come down from

Heaven and *vail* his *Divinity* in our *Natures*, to put on the *Form* of a Servant, and make himself of no Reputation; to *live* a *miserable* Life, and die a *painful* and *accursed* Death. And can we *think* he would ever have laid down so *vast* a Price, as his *Glory* and *Happiness*, his *Life* and *Blood* amount to, for things of a *mean* and *inconsiderable* Value? Had he so *low* an Esteem of his Father's Bosom, and his own *Heavenly* Glory, as to part with them for *Trifles?* Such *slight* Apprehensions of *Shame* and *Sorrow*, *Pain* and *Misery*, as to cast himself into them for the sake of *Beings* he had *little* or *no* Esteem of? Could any thing but what is *inestimable* countervail to that *Glory* he *parted* with, and that *Misery* he endured? Or, can you think those Souls of *little* Worth which the *Son* of *God* thought *worth* his dying for? No, certainly, if we knew nothing of our Souls but this, that the *Son of God* thought them a *good* Purchase at the *dear* Price of his *Bliss*, his *Glory* and his *Blood*; yet from thence we have *infinite* Reason to conclude them most *precious* and *inestimable* Beings, it being *impossible* that he who doth so perfectly understand the *Worth* and *Value* of Things, should ever be so *overseen* as to *pay* so *vast* a Sum for *slight* and cheap Commodities.

3. Let us consider the *vast* Price which *God the Holy Ghost* hath set upon Souls; for 'tis for their sakes that he doth so industriously operate in the Kingdom of our *Saviour*, that he takes so much Pains in it, as he doth and hath always done, ever since it was *first* erected, to drive on that *blessed* Design of making the Souls of Men,

the

the native Subjects of it, happy. It is upon their Account that he hath made ſo *many* Revelations of God's Will to the World, and confirmed them by ſo *many* Miracles, that ſo he might extricate thoſe *precious* Beings out of thoſe Labyrinths of Error in which they had involved and loſt themſelves, and direct them into the way to *true* Happineſs. And it is for their good that he ſtill continues ſhedding forth his *Heavenly* Influences upon them, that he ſtill inſpires them with ſo many *good* Thoughts importunes them with ſuch *urgent* Motives, preſſes upon them with ſuch *earneſt* Strugglings and *vigorous* Efforts, not only of his *preventing* but of his *aſſiſting* Grace too, that if *poſſible* he may awaken them into a Senſe of their Danger, and excite and quicken them to purſue the Methods of their *own* Safety and Happineſs. So infinitely *jealous* is this *bleſſed Spirit* leſt theſe *precious* Beings ſhould miſcarry, that though one would think them ſufficiently *ſafe-guarded* in their Voyage through this *dangerous* Sea, under the Convoy of their *own* Reaſon, yet he dares not truſt them to themſelves, but bears them Company all along, and keeps a watchful Eye over them, and when any Rock is nigh he warns them of it, and when they are beſet with *evil* Spirits, thoſe *miſchievous Pirates* that lie in wait to captivate and *enſlave* them, he preſently comes in to their Aſſiſtance, and unleſs they are reſolved to betray themſelves, always brings them *off* victoriouſly. Nay, though they many times not only yield to theſe *Piratical Spirits*, but join their Forces with them to reſiſt and beat *off* their *merciful* Friend and

Deliverer, yet he doth not therefore presently abandon them, but being infinitely concerned for their Rescue, follows them even to the Mouth of the Enemy's Harbour with his *blessed* Motions and Importunities, and never gives over the Pursuit of them till he hath either actually recovered, or left them past all Hopes of Redemption. And when he sees that they are utterly lost by their *own* Madness and Folly, and that it is in vain to follow them any farther; he casts a *sorrowful* Look upon them, and like a *grieved* Friend, after the utmost Strugglings and *extreme* Efforts of his *affronted* Goodness, unwillingly leaves them to their own *sad* Fate, and gives them up as it were with the Tears in his Eyes. And can you think this *blessed Spirit* would be so *industrious* as he is in his Ministry for Souls, that he would take such *infinite* Pains to save them, be so extremely *urgent* and *sollicitous* for their Welfare, if he did not know them to be a sort of Beings of an *inestimable* Worth and Value? *O blessed God*, what are not our Souls *worth*, that are worth all the Pains thy *blessed Spirit* takes to save, and make them *happy!* That not only *thou* thoughtest *worth* all those *vast* Thoughts and Counsels, which thou hast spent upon them; that not only thy *Son* thought *worth* all those *vast* Condescentions he stooped *to* to put those Thoughts in Execution; but thy *blessed Spirit* also thinks *worth* all that *unwearied* Pains and Endeavour, all that *incessant* Care and Importunity, which he employs about them to save and rescue them from Sin and Misery? Doubtless those Beings must needs be exceeding *precious*, for whose Safety

Safety and Welfare all the *bleſſed Trinity* are ſo unſpeakably concerned.

4. Let us conſider the *vaſt* Price which the *Holy Angels* put upon Souls: For though they are the Crown and Top of all the Creation of God, and do by their *eſſential* Perfection border *neareſt* upon him, yet ſuch is their Opinion of the Souls of Men, that they think it no Diſparagement to converſe with and miniſter to them; but from the beginning of the World till now have been always ready to maintain a *cloſe* Intercourſe and *intimate* Correſpondence with them; and ſo far forth as they are permitted by the Laws of their *inviſible* World, they are continually attending to ſtretch forth a *helping* Hand to them in all their Needs and Neceſſities. Though they are the moſt *illuſtrious* Courtiers of *Heaven*, yet they diſdain not to be the *Life-Guards* of Souls, *to pitch their Tents round about them*, as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes it, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 8. and interpoſe between them and their Danger; to prompt them *to*, and aſſiſt them *in* their Duties; to ſtrengthen them againſt, or to remove their Temptations; to comfort them in their Sorrows, and chaſe away from them thoſe *malignant Spirits* that are always about them, watching all Opportunities to ſeduce and deſtroy them. Hence, *Heb.* i. 14. they are ſaid to be *miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation.* And how much they are concerned for the Safety and Welfare of theſe *precious* Beings they are charged with, is evident by that Paſſage, *Luke* xv. 16. *There is joy in the Preſence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.*

penteth, So *conſiderable* are the Lives of Souls to the *Angels* of *God*, that though they are always entertained with the moſt *raviſhing* Pleaſures, yet *Heaven* itſelf cannot divert them from being overjoyed at the Repentance of a *periſhing* Soul, and celebrating its Recovery with a *new* Feſtival. And whenever the *happy* News is brought them, that ſuch a *dying* Soul is reviv'd, they not only attend to it in the *midſt* of all their Joys and Triumphs, but upon the Hearing of it they ſhout for Joy, and fill the Heavens with a *new* Acclamation. And whenever ſuch a *penitent* Soul hath bidden adieu to the Body, thoſe *bleſſed* Spirits ſtand ready to receive and guard it through thoſe *Legions* of *malignant Spirits* that do always infeſt theſe *lower* Tracts of Air, and to conduct it ſafe to thoſe *happy* Abodes where it is to lodge till the Reſurrection; for is ſaid of *Lazarus*'s Soul, *Luke* xvi. 22. *That it was carried by Angels into* Abraham's *Boſom*. All which is a *clear* Demonſtration of the *vaſt* Eſteem which thoſe *bleſſed Angels* have of Souls. For can it be thought that ſuch *noble* Beings who have a *God* and themſelves to converſe with, and have ſo *immediate* a Proſpect both of *his* Beauty and their *own* to exerciſe their Faculties and employ their Contemplation, would be ſo *ready* and *willing* as they are to attend upon Souls, and miniſter to their Safety and Happineſs, if they had not a *mighty* Value and Eſtimation of them? Surely if theſe *immortal* Spirits within us were not unſpeakably *dear* and *precious*, thoſe *angelical* Beings, who have always the moſt *ſublime* and *enraviſhing* Objects before them to employ and

and entertain their Faculties, would never have thought it *worth the while* to ſtickle ſo zealouſly in their Affairs, and concern themſelves ſo much about them. And thus our *Saviour* himſelf argues, *Mat.* xviii. 10. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven*; that is, do not undervalue any Soul; for how *mean* or *little* ſoever ſome of them may appear to you, they are under the *Guardianſhip* of thoſe *bleſſed Angels* that are the Courtiers of *God*, and do always attend upon his *Majeſtic Preſence*.

5. And *laſtly*, Let us conſider the vaſt Price which the *Devils* themſelves do put upon Souls; for ever ſince thoſe *malignant* Spirits through their *own* Pride and Ambition revolted from *God*, and conſpired to make War with *Heaven*, and revenge their Expulſion thence, the *conſtant* Drift of all their Deſigns and Actions hath been to ſeduce and ruin them, being conſcious that of all the Beings that are within the reach of their Power, there are none ſo *dear* to *God* as theſe, and that by ſeducing from him theſe his moſt *precious* Creatures, they ſhall do him the *greateſt* ſpight, and moſt effectually revenge upon him their *own* Damnation. For doubtleſs were there any Beings below the Moon *more dear* to *God* than *theſe*, they would bend their Force and Malice againſt them, and not make theſe as they do, the *only* Centers of their *miſchievous* Activity. Had they any *nobler* Game to fly at, their *ambitious* Malice would diſdain to ſtoop to the Quarry of Souls; but becauſe of all others theſe are the *nobleſt* and beſt *worth* the

the ruining, therefore do theſe *malignant* Spirits turn all their Artillery upon them, and level all their *fiery* Darts againſt them. And how *ambitious* they are of ſeducing our Souls, and training them on to Perdition, is evident by the *infinite* Wiles, and Snares, and Stratagems they contrive againſt them, by their *unwearied* Diligence to watch all Opportunities againſt them; to ſurprize them where they are *careleſs*, and aſſault them where they are *weakeſt*, and cheat them with *diſguiſed* Suggeſtions; to inſpect their Humours, and apply themſelves to their Intereſt, and nick their Tempers, with convenient *Temptations*. And if after all their Labour, Craft and Contrivance, they can but ſeize the Game they hunt for, the Blood of a Soul is ſo *rich* a Draught, that they think it a *ſufficient* Recompence for all their *painful* and *miſchievous* Devices; for St. *Peter* tells us, that *they go about like roaring Lions, ſeeking whom they may devour*. And to be ſure thoſe *malignant* Spirits would never be ſo impertinently *miſchievous*, as to ſpend their time in catching Flies; and did they not know our Souls to be *noble* Preys, they would never go ſo far about as they do, nor take ſo much Care and Pains to catch and enſnare them, So that from their *unwearied* Diligence to ſeduce and ruin us, we may moſt certainly conclude either that they are very *fooliſh* Devils, or that our Souls are very *precious Beings*; but howſoever, their Diligence to deſtroy them is a *plain* Argument that they eſteem them *precious*, it being by no means to be ſuppoſed, that ſuch *wiſe* and *intelligent* Beings as they are, would ſomuch concern themſelves,

ſelves, as they do, about things which they had *little* or *no* Eſteem for.

And thus you ſee at what a *vaſt* Rate our Souls are valued by the whole World of Spirits; how from the *higheſt* to the *loweſt*, thoſe *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Judges of the *juſt* Worth of Souls, do all unanimouſly concur in a *great* and *high* Eſtimation. So that whether we value them by their own *natural* Capacities, or by the Eſtimation of thoſe who are beſt able to judge of their Worth and Excellency, we have *abundant* Reaſon to conclude them moſt *precious* and *ineſtimable* Beings. And now I ſhall conclude this Argument with ſome Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, by what it is that we ought to value ourſelves and eſtimate the Dignity of *our own* Natures, *viz.* by our *rational* and *immortal* Souls, thoſe *excellent* Beings that are ſo *invaluable* in themſelves, and ſo highly eſteemed by the *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Judges. 'Tis this *intelligent* and *immortal* Nature within us, that is the Crown and Flower of our Beings; 'tis by this that we are exalted above the Level of *mere* Animals; by this that we are allied to Angels, and do border upon *God* himſelf: And he that values himſelf by any thing but his Soul, and thoſe things which are its *proper* Graces and Ornaments, begins at the *wrong* End of himſelf, forgets his Jewels, and eſtimates his Eſtate by his Lumber. And yet *good God!* what *fooliſh* Meaſures do the Generality of Men take of themſelves? Were we not forced by *too* many *woeful* Experiments, it would be hard to imagine that any Creature that believes a *rational* and *immortal* Soul to be a Part of its Nature,

Nature, would be so *ridiculous* as to value itself, by the *little trifling* Advantages of a *well-coloured* Skin, a Suit of fine Clothes, a Puff of popular Applause, or a *few* Bags of *white* and *red* Earth; and yet, *God Help* us, these are the only things almost by which we value and difference ourselves from others. You are a much better Man than your Neighbour; he, alas, is a *poor contemptible* Wretch, a *little creeping despicable* Thing, not worthy to be looked upon, or taken notice of by such a one as you. Why in the Name of God, what is the Matter? Where is this mighty Difference between you and him? Hath not he a Soul as well as you? A Soul that is *capable* to live as long, and to be as *happy* as yours? Yes, yes, 'tis true indeed; but notwithstanding, *God* be thanked, you are another-guess Man than he; for you have a much *handsomer* Body, your Apparel is much more *fine* and *fashionable*, you live in a more *splendid* Equipage, and have a *larger* Purse to maintain it, and your Name *forsooth*, is more in Vogue, and makes a far *greater* Noise in the World. And is this all the Difference between your *mighty* selves and your *pitiful* Neighbours? Alas? poor Men? A few Days more will put an End to this, and when your rich Attires are reduced to a *Winding-Sheet*, and all your *vast* Possessions to *six Feet of Earth*, what will become of all those little Trifles by which you value yourselves? Where will be the *Beauty* or *Wealth*, the *Port* or *Garb*, which you are now so *proud* of? Alas! Now that *lovely* Body looks as *pale* and *ghastly*, that *lofty* Soul is left as bear, as poor and naked as your despised Neighbour's.

Should

Should you now meet his *wandering Ghoſt* in the *wide* World of Spirits, what would you have to boaſt of more than he, now your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vaniſhed, and all your *outward* Pomp and Splendor ſhrouded in the *Horrors* of a *ſilent* Grave? Now you will have nothing to diſtinguiſh you from the moſt *Contemptible*, unleſs you have *wiſer* and *better* Souls, and by ſo much as you were more *reſpected* for your *Beauty* and *Wealth*, your *Garb* and *Equipage* in this World, by ſo much will you be more *deſpiſed* for your *Pride* and *Inſolence*, your *Covetouſneſs* and *Senſuality* in the other. Let us therefore learn to value ourſelves by that which will abide by us, by our *immortal* Souls, and by thoſe *heavenly* Graces which do *adorn* and *accompliſh* them; by our *Humility* and *Devotion*, by our *Charity* and *Meekneſs*, by our *Temperance* and *Juſtice*; all which are ſuch *Preheminences*, as will ſurvive our Funerals, and diſtinguiſh us from *baſe* and *abject* Souls for ever. But for a *rational* and *immortal* Creature to *prize* itſelf by any ſuch *temporary* Advantages, is altogether as vain and ridiculous, as it was for the Emperor *Nero* to value himſelf for being an *excellent* Fidler.

2*dly*, From hence alſo I infer how much we are obliged to live up to the Dignity of our Natures. Should a *Stranger* to Mankind be admitted into this *buſy* Stage of *human* Affairs, to ſurvey our Actions, and the *paultry* Deſigns we drive at, certainly he would hardly imagine that we believed ourſelves to be ſuch a noble Sort and Strain of Beings as we are. If you ſaw a Man ſeriouſly employing himſelf in ſome *ſordid* and

and *beggarly* Drudgery, could you imagine that he believed himſelf to be the Son of a King, and the Heir of a Crown? And when it is ſo *apparent* that the *main* of our Deſign is to prog for our Fleſh, and make a *comfortable* Proviſion for a few Years Eaſe and Luxury, who would think that we believed ourſelves to be *immortal* Spirits that muſt live *for ever* in an *inconceivable* Happineſs or Miſery? When we conſider the high Rank which we hold in the Creation, the *vaſt* Capacities which there are in our Natures, and the *noble* Ends which we were made and deſigned for, are we not aſhamed to think how *poorly* we proſtitute ourſelves, and vilify *our own* Faculties by the *ſordid* Drudgeries wherein we exerciſe and employ them? When we think what a Reputation we have throughout all the World of Spirits, what a *vaſt* Rate we are valued at by *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, are we not confounded to think how we *undervalue* ourſelves by thoſe *low* aad *inglorious* Ends, which we purſue and aim at? *O good God*, that thou ſhould'ſt give me a Soul of an *immortal* Nature, a Soul that is *big* enough for all the Joys which thy *everlaſting Heaven* is compoſed of, and I be ſuch a Wretch to myſelf, ſuch a Traytor to the Dignity of my *own* Nature, as to give *up* myſelf and all my Faculties to the Purſuit of ſuch *vain* and *wretched* Trifles! That I who am akin to Angels, ſhould make myſelf a *Muckworm*, and chuſe *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Fate, to leave Crowns and Scepters, and live among the *ſavage* Herds of the Wilderneſs! That having ſuch a *great* and *noble* Nature, I ſhould content myſelf to live like a Beaſt,

Beaſt, and aim no *higher* than if I had been born only to eat, and drink, and ſleep, and wake, for *thirty* or *forty* Years together, and then retire into a *ſilent* Grave, and be *inſenſible* for ever? Wherefore, in the Name of *God*, let us at laſt remember what we are, and what we are born to. Let us conſider, that we have Faculties that are *capable* of exerting themſelves *for ever* in the moſt *inraviſhing* Contemplation, and Love of the *eternal* Fountain of Truth and Goodneſs; of copying and tranſcribing his moſt *adorable* Perfections, his *Wiſdom*, *Goodneſs*, *Purity*, and *Juſtice*, from whence the *infinite* Happineſs of his Nature derives; and thereby of glorifying us into *living* Images of *God*, and rendering us *like* him both in Beauty and Happineſs; in a Word, that we have Faculties to converſe with Angels and with bleſſed Spirits, to bear a part in the *eternal* Comfort of their Joys and Praiſes, and to reliſh all thoſe *unknown* Delights of which their *everlaſting Heaven* doth conſiſt. And having ſuch *great* and *noble* Powers in us, is it not a *burning* Shame that they ſhould be always condemned to an *endleſs* Purſuits of Shadows and Impertinencies? Let us therefore rouſe up ourſelves, and ſhake off this *ſordid* and *degenerate* Temper that ſinks and depreſſes us, and makes us act ſo infinitely *unbecoming* the Dignity of our *immortal* Natures. And ſince we are deſcended from and deſigned for the *Heavenly Family*, let us learn to demean ourſelves upon Earth, as becomes the Natives of *Heaven*. Let us diſdain all *baſe* and *ſordid*, all *low* and *unworthy* Ends of Action, as Things beneath our *illuſtrious*

strious Rank and Station in the World of Beings, and live in a *continual* Tendency towards, and Preparation for that *Heavenly State* which is the *proper* Orb and Sphere of our Natures.

3*dly*, From hence also I infer how much they undervalue themselves, that sell their Souls for the Trifles of this World. For since we know beforehand that the Wrath of God is revealed from *Heaven* against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men, and he hath plainly assured us that our Souls must smart *for ever* for our Sins, it necessarily follows, that whenever we knowingly suffer ourselves to be enticed into Sin, we make a *wilful* Forfeiture of our Souls. He that knows that such a Draught, however *sweetened* and made *palatable*, is yet compounded with the Juice of *deadly Nightshade*, and notwithstanding that will have the *poisonous* Draught, is wilfully bent to murder and destroy himself. And when we see that the Pleasure of our Sin draws after it the Ruin of our Souls, and yet will Sin notwithstanding, we do in effect stake our Souls against it, and with our Eyes open, make this *desperate* Bargain, that upon Condition we may enjoy such a *sinful* Pleasure, we will willingly surrender *up* our *immortal* Spirits to the Pains of an *endless* and *intolerable* Damnation. And if so, *O blessed God*, how do the generality of Men depreciate and undervalue themselves? For how often do we see Men in their *little* Frauds and Cozenages, sell their Souls for a Penny gain; in their *lascivious* and *intemperate* Humours, barter their Souls for a Moment's Mirth or Pleasure; in their *ambitious* Projects and Designs,

part

part with their Souls for a Blaſt of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noiſe. For in every Temptation to Sin, the Devil cheapens our *immortal* Souls, bids ſo much *Pleaſure*, or ſo much *Profit* for them; and in every Compliance with the Temptation, we take his Offer, and ſtrike the *fatal* Bargain; ſo that if we will ſin, we had need ſin for ſomething, ſince we muſt pay ſo dearly for it. But, alas! there is no Proffer the Devil can make us, that is a *tolerable* Price for the Blood of our Souls; though he ſhould offer us the *whole* World for it, our *Saviour* aſſures us, that he would bid us infinitely to our Loſs; and if ſo, what *wretched* Sales do we make of our Souls, when we ſin for Trifles, *lie* and *cheat* to get a Penny, conſent to a *wicked* Motion for a Pleaſure that will wither while we are ſmelling to it, and expire in the very Enjoyment? For ſo much we value our Souls at, and do in effect declare, that in our Eſteem theſe *precious* Beings, which *God* and *Angels* ſet ſo high a Price on, are worth no more than what that *Profit* or *Pleaſure*, for which we ſin, amounts to. *O good God!* What *cheap* and *worthleſs* Things then are our Souls in our Eſteem, who ſell and barter them every Day for ſuch *mean* and *worthleſs* Trifles? How do we part with our *Gold* for *Droſs*, and exchange our *Jewels* for *Pebbles?* What *ſordid* Thoughts, what *wretched, vile* Opinions have we of ourſelves, that are ſo ready, upon all Occaſions, to ſell ourſelves for nought, or which is next to nought, for the *ſorry* Proffers of every *baſe* and *infamous* Luſt? O would to God we would at laſt make but a *juſt* Eſtimate of our-

ſelves, and thereupon reſolve, as is moſt *reaſonable* we ſhould, never to comply with any *ſinful* Motion, till we can get more by it than our Souls are worth, and then I am ſure we ſhould be *for ever* deaf to all the Proffers which the *Devil* or *World* can make us.

4*thly* and *laſtly*, From hence alſo I infer how much we are obliged, above all Things, to take care of our Souls: For ſince they are Beings of ſuch *vaſt* Capacities in themſelves, and of ſuch an *high* Eſtimation in the World of Spirits, methinks we ſhould all be convinced, that to take care of their Welfare, and prevent their *everlaſting* Miſcarriage, is the *higheſt* Concern and Intereſt of a Man. And yet, *God* forgive us, if we conſult the *common* Practice of Mankind, we ſhall find that there is ſcarce any thing in which we have any Intereſt at all, that is more *ſlighted* and *diſregarded* by us. Our Body is the Darling that hath our Hearts, and takes *up* all our Care and Thoughts; and to entertain its Appetite, and accommodate it with Pleaſures and Conveniencies, there is no Expence either of Labour or Time grudged, or thought much of; but as for the Soul, that *precious* and *immortal* Thing, which will be living, and perceiving *unſpeakable* Pleaſures or Pains when this Body is *dead* and *inſenſible*, that is overlooked as a Thing not *worthy* our *ſerious* Notice or Regard. And though we cannot but be *ſenſible* how much it is diſeaſed in all it Faculties, how much its *Underſtanding* is *over-loaded* with *Error* and *Ignorance*, its *Will* feſtered with *unreaſonable* Malice and Obſtinacy, and its *Conſcience* oppreſſed with Loads

Loads of Guilt *ſufficient* to ſink it to the *nethermoſt* Hell; yet we ſeem, for the Generality, to be no more concerned at it, than if its Ruin or Recovery were equally indifferent to us. We can ſee it periſhing before our Eyes, without any Remorſe or Compaſſion; we can paſs Day after Day without making the *leaſt* Offer or Attempt to recover it, without offering *up* a Prayer for it, or entertaining a *ſerious* Thought what will become of it *for ever*. O *inſenſible* Creatures that we are, thus to neglect and abandon the moſt *precious* Part of ourſelves; the Part that makes us Men, and by which alone we are *capable* of being *happy* or *miſerable for ever!* Let me therefore beſeech and conjure you, even by all that is *ſacred* and *ſerious*, by every thing that is *dear* and *precious* to you, by your *beſt* Hopes, and the moſt *important* Concern of your *everlaſting* Fate, to take pity upon your *periſhing* Souls, to conſider the *amazing* Dangers whereunto you have expoſed them, and to conſult the Means of their Recovery; to prick and affect your Hearts with the Senſe and Conſideration of their *impending* Ruin, till you have forced them to cry out, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* To bathe their Wounds with the Tears of Repentance, and to pour into them that moſt *ſovereign* Balm of a *ſerious* Purpoſe and Reſolution of Amendment; to pray earneſtly for them, and keep a continual Guard about them, and to ſtrive vigorouſly with thoſe *ſinful* Inclinations that threaten to ſink and ruin them. And if we will be but *content* to undergo theſe *neceſſary* Cares and Pains to ſecure them, we ſhall be ſure, when they leave theſe

Bodies to reap the Fruits of all in the Possession of an unspeakably *happy* and *glorious* Eternity.

II. I proceed now to the second Proposition, contained in these Words, *that our precious Souls may be lost.* And this our *Saviour* plainly supposes, *If he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul.* The *Greek* Word is ζημιωθῇ, which properly signifies to receive a Mulct, or to suffer Damage; and therefore it is here opposed to κερδήσῃ, *if he shall gain.* So that the Word doth not denote the *absolute* Loss or Extinction of the Soul, but its undergoing some *dreadful* Mulct, or suffering some *irreparable* Damage. For, as *Hierocles* hath observed, ὡς οὔτε ἀθανάτῳ ὐσίᾳ θανάτῳ μέρας μνταλεχεῖν, ὐ τῇ εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐκβάσει, ἀλλὰ τῇ τῦ εὖ εἶναι ἀποπτώσει. *Immortal Substances cannot so die as to lose their Being, but so as to lose their Well-being they may.* And accordingly our *Saviour* himself calls the Punishment of the Wicked in Hell-Fire, destroying them, *Mat.* x. 28. *Fear not them which kill the Body——but fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* Where, by *destroying*, he doth not mean putting a *final* End to their Being, but putting them into an *irrecoverable* State of Ill-being; for in this State of Destruction, they still continue to act, to *weep* and *wail*, and *gnash their Teeth*, as *Christ* elsewhere tells us, *Mat.* xiii. 42; which Actions plainly suppose their Continuance in Being, though in a most *wretched* and *deplorable* Ill-being. So that by the Loss of the Soul here is not meant the Destruction of its Being, but its being exposed to an *irreparable* Damage in the *other* World. And to prove that in

in this Senſe a Soul may be loſt, I ſhall endeavour theſe two Things.

Firſt, To ſhew you what Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World.

Secondly, Upon what Accounts it is *liable* to, and in Danger of them.

I. What Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World. To which I anſwer, that there is a *ſevenfold* Damage whereunto the Soul of Man may be expoſed *hereafter*.

1*ſt*. It is *liable* to be deprived of the *higheſt* Happineſs it is capable of.

2*dly*. It is *liable* to the moſt *dreadful* Puniſhment and Correction of the Father of Spirits.

3*dly*. It is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of Devils, and *other malignant* Spirits.

4*thly*. It is *liable* to be confined to the moſt *diſmal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes.

5*thly*. It is *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *croſs*, *wild* and *furious* Paſſions.

6*thly*. It is *liable* to the *intolerable* Anguiſh of its own *guilty* Conſcience.

7*thly*. It is *liable* to endure all theſe *diſmal* Things *for ever*.

1*ſt*. The Soul of Man is *liable* to be deprived of the *higheſt* Happineſs it is *capable* of. The *higheſt* Happineſs that a Soul is *capable* of is to enjoy *God*; that is, to *know*, and *love*, and *reſemble* him; and to be admitted into the *noble* Society of thoſe *pure* and *bleſſed* Spirits that do thus enjoy him; of all which Happineſs a Soul may be *for ever* deprived by its own *vicious* and *depraved* Temper. For beſides, that by ſuch a Temper it may provoke the *juſt* and *holy* God, who hath the Diſpoſal of the Fate of

Souls, to deprive it of, and baniſh it from this Happineſs *for ever*; it may thereby alſo utterly *incapacitate* itſelf from ever enjoying it; it may promote and raiſe that Temper to ſuch a degree of *Averſation* and *Antipathy to God*, and *canker* it into ſuch an *inveterate* Enmity to all the Perfections of his Nature, as that at laſt it may be utterly *incapable* of any ſuch *beatifical* Knowledge of them, as can any ways incline it to love and imitate him; For the *Apoſtle* tells us, that *the carnal Mind is enmity to God*, Rom. viii. 7. From whence it is evident, that in every Degree of Sin, there is a Degree of Averſation to *God*, which Averſation may be improved into ſuch an *implacable* Malice againſt him, as that our Knowledge of him, inſtead of *endearing* him to us, or engaging us to imitate him, may only *avert* us from, *provoke* and *irritate* us againſt him, and by preſenting to us thoſe *immenſe* Perfections, for which he deſerves our *deareſt* Love, and *deepeſt* Adoration, may only fill our Minds with the *greater* Rage and *more invincible* Horror. And when the Soul is arrived to ſuch a Degree of Malignity againſt *God*, it is as *impoſſible* for it to enjoy him, as to be *recreated* with Torment, or delighted with the Objects of its own *Antipathies*. And for the ſame Reaſon alſo, it muſt be *incapable* of enjoying the Society of *bleſſed Spirits*; becauſe it hath acquired a Temper that is infinitely *repugnant* to their *heavenly Genius*: ſo that if ſuch a *prejudiced* Soul ſhould, when it is arrived into *Eternity*, find the Gates of *Heaven* open to receive it, it would doubtleſs be ſo offended at every thing that is *heavenly*, ſo ſtartled at the Sight of *God*, and the Diſplays of

of his *hated* Perfections, and ſeized with ſuch a Horror againſt thoſe *god-like* Beings that dwell there, and are perpetually *contemplating* and *adoring*, *loving* and *imitating* him, that it would fly away of its *own* Accord from that *bliſsful* Habitation, as Bats and Owls do from the Light of the Day, and rather chuſe to baniſh itſelf into *eternal* Darkneſs and Deſpair, than be ſhut up *for ever* in a *Heaven* ſo infinitely *repugnant* to its Nature. And certainly to be thus excommunicated from the *ſupreme* Happineſs of *our* Natures, and be forced to live in *everlaſting* Exile from *God* and *bleſſed* Spirits, and wander about like *wretched* Vagabonds that are chaſed and driven from all Hopes of Contentment, will be *unſpeakable* Damage to our Souls.

2*dly*. The Soul of Man is *liable* to the moſt *dreadful* Puniſhment and Correction of the *Father of Spirits*. There is no Doubt but *ſpiritual* Agents can ſtrike as immediately upon Spirits, as *bodily* Agents can upon Bodies; and though we, who are Spectators only of *corporeal* Action, cannot diſcern the Manner how *one* Spirit acts upon *another*, yet there is no Reaſon to doubt of the Thing; and if there be ſuch a *mutual* Communication of Action between them, there is no doubt but they can mutually make *each other* feel each others Pleaſures and Diſpleaſures; and if ſo, then it is only to ſuppoſe that the *leſs powerful* Spirits are ſubject to the *violent* Impreſſion of the *more powerful* ones, and conſequently that all *finite* Spirits are liable to the Laſh of an *infinite* one; for why ſhould it be more *difficult* for the Father of our Spirits to correct our Spirits, than it is for the Parents

of our Fleſh to correct our Fleſh? For though our Souls are no more *impreſſible* with *material* Stripes than Sun-Beams are with the Blows of a Hammer, yet are they liable to *horrid* and *diſmal* Thoughts, and to be as much pained and aggrieved by them, as our Bodies are by the moſt *exquiſite* Torments. So that if *God* be diſpleaſed with us, he can imprint his Wrath upon our Minds in *black* and *ghaſtly* Thoughts, and cauſe it perpetually to drop like *burning Sulphur* upon our Souls. He cannot only abandon us to the *furious* Reflections of our own *natural* Conſciences, which, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, will be *hereafter* extremely *painful* and *vexatious*, but he can alſo infuſe *ſupernatural* Horrors into us, and pour in ſuch Swarms of *terrible* Thoughts upon us as will give us no Reſt, but ſting us perpetually Day and Night with *inexpreſſible* Anguiſh. And of this you have a *woeful* Example in that *miſerable* Wretch *Francis Spira*, who, upon that *fearful* Breach he made in his Conſcience by a *cowardly* renouncing of his *Religion*, was without any Symptoms of a *bodily* Melancholy immediately ſeized with ſuch an *inexpreſſible* Agony of Mind as *amazed* his Phyſicians, *aſtoniſhed* his Friends, and *ſtruck* Terror into all that converſed with him. For he was ſo *near* to the Condition of a *damned Ghoſt*, that he verily believed *Hell* itſelf was more *tollerable* than thoſe *inviſible* Laſhes that were continually laid upon his Soul; and therefore wiſhed he were in *Hell*, and would gladly have diſpatched himſelf thither, in hope to find Sanctuary there from thoſe *vengeful* Thoughts which continually preyed

preyed upon his Soul. And if in this World our Soul is ſo *liable* to the Rod of the *Father of Spirits*, we may be ſure it will be ſo in the *other* too, where *God*, if he pleaſes, can render it an *eternal Hell* to itſelf, by pouring continually into it *freſh* Floods of *horrible* Thoughts, which being thruſt on by an *Almighty* Power, and perpetually urged and repeated on the Mind, muſt neceſſarily create in it not only *exquiſite*, but *uninterrupted* Torment. And it being in his Power thus to Laſh our Souls, to be ſure, when once he is implacably incenſed againſt them, (as he will be *hereafter*, if we do not appeaſe him) he will let looſe his Power upon them, and make them feel his *wrathful* Reſentments in thoſe *dire* and *frightful* Thoughts with which he will ſting and ſcourge them *for ever*. And if the Soul carry into *Eternity* with it thoſe *provoking* Luſts which do here incenſe God's Diſpleaſure againſt it, it will there have no Shelter from the Storm of his Vengeance, which like a Shower of *Fire* and *Brimſtone*, will be continually pouring down upon it. For while it continues in this Shop of Vanities, it hath a *great* Variety of Objects to divert thoſe *diſmal* Thoughts which *God* many times infuſes into it; but in the *other* World all theſe *diverting* Objects will be removed, and then every *diſmal* Thought which *God* lets looſe will ſeize and faſten upon it, and, like *Prometheus*'s Vultures, prey on its *wretched* Heart *for ever*.

3*dly*. The Soul of Man is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of *Devils*, and other *malignant Spirits*. For whenever the Souls of Men do leave

leave their Bodies, they doubtleſs flock with the Birds of their own Feather, and comfort themſelves with ſuch *ſeparate* Spirits as are of their *own* Genius and Temper; for beſides that Likeneſs doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and cauſe them to aſſociate with their *own* Kind, *good* and *bad* Spirits are by the *eternal* Laws of the *other* World diſtributed in *two ſeparate* Nations, and there live apart from one another, having no *other* Communication or Intercourſe, but what is between *two hoſtile* Countries that are continually deſigning and attempting *one* againſt *another*. So that when *wicked* Souls do leave this *terreſtrial* Abode, and paſs into *Eternity*, they are preſently incorporated, by the Laws of that *inviſible* World, into the Nation of *wicked* Spirits, and confined *for ever* to their moſt *wretched* Society and Converſe; and then how *miſerable* muſt their Condition be, who are damned to ſuch a *helliſh* Neighbourhood, and are allowed no *other* Company but Devils and *deviliſh* Spirits? For ſince, as I have already ſhewed you, Spirits can as well act upon *one another* as Bodies, what can be expected when ſuch *malignant* Spirits meet, but that they ſhould be continually ſnarling among themſelves, and baiting and worrying *one another?* When *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Ill-Nature*, are the *common* Genius that inſpires and acts the *whole* Society, what can their Converſation be, but a *continual* Intercourſe of *mutual* Miſchiefs and Vexations; eſpecially conſidering how they have here laid the Foundations of an *eternal* Quarrel againſt *one another?* For *there* the Companions in Sin will meet,

meet, who, by their *ill* Counſels, *wicked* Inſinuations, and *bad* Examples, did mutually contribute to *each* others Ruin; and when theſe ſhall meet in that *woeful* State, how will the *tormenting* Senſe of thoſe *irreparable* Injuries they have done *each* other, incite them to exerciſe their *helliſh* Fury upon, and play the Devils with *one another?* And when a Company of *waſpiſh* Spirits ſo implacably incenſed againſt *one another* ſhall meet, and like ſo many *Scorpions*, *Snakes* and *Adders*, be ſhut up together in the *infernal* Dens, how is it *poſſible* they ſhould bear *hiſſing* at, and *ſtinging*, and *ſpitting* Venom in *one another's* Faces? But then beſides the *mutual* Plagues which thoſe *incenſed* and *furious* Spirits muſt needs be ſuppoſed to inflict upon *one another*, they will be alſo nakedly expoſed to the *powerful* Malice of the Devils, thoſe *fierce* Executioners of God's *righteous* Vengeance, who, as *we now* find by Experience, have Power to ſuggeſt *black* and *horrid* Thoughts, and to torture our Souls with ſuch *dreadful* Imaginations, as are far more *ſharp* and *exquiſite* than any *bodily* Torment. And if *now* they have ſuch Power over us when God thinks fit to let them looſe, what will they have *hereafter*, when theſe our *wretched* Spirits ſhall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they ſhall have a *free* Scope to exerciſe their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice with our Vexations and Torments? It ſeems at leaſt a mighty *probable* Notion, that that *horrid* Agony of our *Saviour* in the Garden, which cauſed him to *ſhriek* and *groan*, and *ſweat* as it were *great* Drops of Blood,

Blood, was only the Effect of thoſe *preter-natural* Terrors which the Devils, with whom he was then in Combat, impreſſed upon his *innocent* Mind. And if they had ſo much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul, that was ſo ſtrongly guarded with the moſt *perfect* and *unſpotted* Virtues, what will they have over ours when God hath abandoned us to them, and throws us as Preys into their Mouths? With what an *helliſh* Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls, in which there is ſo much Tinder for their *injected* Sparks of Horror to take fire on? When therefore our *guilty* Spirits ſhall not only be *liable* to the Scourge of *God*, but Devils and *damned* Ghoſts *too* ſhall have their *full Swing* at them, doubtleſs the *Hell within* them will be far more *intolerable* than any *Hell* of Fire and Brimſtone *without* them.

4*thly*, The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to be confined to the moſt *diſmal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes. What or where the Abode of *wicked* Spirits is till the Morn of the Reſurrection, is no where expreſly determined in the *Holy Scripture*; but ſince, whereſoever they are, they are doubtleſs under the Power and Dominion of the Devil, who, as the *Scripture* aſſures us, is *Prince of the Power of the Air*; it is highly *probable* that their *preſent* Reſidence is in theſe *lower* Regions of the World; that either being chaſed by thoſe *infernal* Powers under whoſe Tyranny they are, they are continually hurrying about in theſe *inferior* Tracts of Air, or, which perhaps is more *probable*, that they are impriſoned by thoſe *inviſible* Miniſters of the

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divine Juſtice within the *dark* Abyſſes and *under-ground* Vaults of the Earth, and not permitted, but upon *ſpecial* Occaſions, to come abroad into this *upper* Region of Light and Liberty. But whereſoever they are, it is doubtleſs in ſome ſuch *horrid* and *diſmal* Priſon, as is fit only to receive ſuch *vile* and *deſperate* Malefactors, and ſecure them till the *great* Aſſizes, when they ſhall be brought forth to receive their Trial and *final* Judgment: And then being united to their Bodies, and thereby made *liable* to *corporeal* Torments, the *Scripture* expreſly affirms that they ſhall be ſhut up in *everlaſting* Flames, and be tormented *for ever* in a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone; for then the *Lord* himſelf ſhall come in Flames of Fire to render Vengeance to all thoſe that obeyed not his Goſpel; and having, with thoſe *raging* Flames, ſet every Part of this *lower* World on Fire, he will *reaſcend* with all his Train to the *celeſtial* Manſions, and leave the *Wicked* weltering *for ever* in this *burning* Vault below; for it is plain, that the *everlaſting* Fire, to which he will then ſentence them, is the Conflagration of the World, which, after the *Juſt* are raiſed, and caught up in the Clouds above the Reach of its *aſpiring* Flames, ſhall break forth on every ſide, and turn all this *Atmoſphere* into a Furnace of *inquenchable* Fire, and therein ſhall thoſe *wicked* Miſcreants that would not be reclaimed, be condemned to live *for ever*. For the Judgment being ended, the Judge and all his Retinue ſhall return, and leave them in the midſt of a *burning* World, ſurrounded with *Smoak* and *Fire*, *Darkneſs* and *Confuſion*, and

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wrapt in *fierce* and *mercileſs* Flames, which ſhall ſtick cloſe to, and pierce through and through their Bodies, and *for ever* prey upon, but never conſume them. And what an *intolerable* Mulct this is, I leave every Man's *natural* Senſe to judge.

5*thly*, The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *croſs*, *wild*, and *furious* Paſſions. We have *ſufficient* Experience in this Life how *vexatious* our *croſs* and *exceſſive* Paſſions are; for when our Paſſions are divided, and *contrary* Objects have raiſed *contrary* Deſires and Appetites in us, how do they rend and diſtract our Souls, and cauſe *perpetual* Mutinies and Tumults within us? But by reaſon of thoſe many *ſenſual* Gratifications with which we now make a ſhift to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe Daughters of the Horſe-Leech, when they cry out, *give*, *give*, we cannot be ſo *ſenſible* of the Trouble and Vexation of them; unleſs we now ſubdue and mortify them, we ſhall be forced to carry them into *Eternity* along with us. For by being *ſeparated* from their Bodies, the Souls of Men are never *ſeparated* from their *prevailing* Tempers, but in their *ſeparated* State are, for the main, of the *ſame* Diſpoſition as they were *here*, and do retain the *ſame* Paſſions and Appetites. 'Tis true, they cannot be ſuppoſed to retain their *bodily* Appetites, after they have thrown *off* their Bodies, but when they have wholly *accuſtomed* themſelves in this Life to *fleſhly* Pleaſures, and have never experienced *ſpiritual* ones, it is impoſſible but that, in the *other*, they ſhould be tormented with an *outragious* Deſire of being

being *imbodied* again ; that ſo being *incapable* of reliſhing any *other*, they may repeat thoſe *fleſhly* Pleaſures which heretofore they were accuſtomed to, and act over the *brutiſh* Scene anew. And this *vehement* Hankering of theſe *carnalized* Souls to return into their *bodily* State, is perhaps the only Senſuality that a *ſeparate* Soul is *capable* of ; but it is ſuch a Senſuality as muſt neceſſarily render ſuch Souls extremely *miſerable* ; for in *that* State it will be like the Hunger of a *ſtarving* Man, that is immured between *two dead* Walls , that is, it will be a *fierce* Deſire without Hope of Satisfaction, a *corroding* Hunger, ſharpened with Deſpair of Food, than which there is nothing more intolerably *grievous* and *tormenting*. For how will it vex the *wretched* Spirit to look back from the Shores of Eternity into this *corporeal* World, and to ruminate thus with itſelf ; *O miſerable Creature that I am ! here am I caſt away for ever upon a ſtrange and deſolate Shore, where I muſt famiſh for want of Food, pine away a long Eternity, and wander to and fro for ever, tormented with reſtleſs Rage, and hungry unſatisfied Deſires ; where is not one Pleaſure that I can reliſh, not an Object that I can taſte any Sweetneſs in. Woe is me ! yonder are all my Joys and Comforts, all that is dear and precious to me. O that I might go back again, and be once more reſtored to the Enjoyment of them ! but alas ! between me and them there runs an impaſſable Gulph, that deprives me of all Hope of returning !* For thus will the *unhappy* Soul torment itſelf with an *outrageous* Longing for

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that which it can never hope to enjoy. But then, beſides this Appetite of Senſuality, which it will there be vexed with, it will alſo carry along with it all that *Envy* and *Malice*, that *Wrath* and *Impatience*, *Pride* and *Inſolence*, which it here contracted; which *black* and *helliſh* Paſſions will prove *perpetual* Furies in its Boſom; for in that *wretched* State it will not only have Objects always *preſent* to excite them, but ſuch objects *too* as will excite them all at once to the moſt *outrageous* Exceſſes. For when all at once it ſhall ſee others advanced to the *greateſt* Heights of Glory and Happineſs, and itſelf not only rejected but abandoned to *endleſs* Miſery, the Senſe of this muſt neceſſarily irritate all its *deviliſh* Paſſions to the *higheſt* Extremities, and cauſe its *Pride* to ſwell, its *Envy* to burſt, and its *Wrath* to boil into a *diabolical* Fury; and what a *continual Hell* muſt this create in the Soul, to be perpetually *worried* with ſo many *black* and *rubid* Paſſions, to have all its *inferior* Parts and Affections, like thoſe of the *Monſter Scylla*, whom the *Poets* talk of, as ſo many Dogs continually *barking* and *ſnarling* at *one another*, and yet remain *unſeparable*, as being *Comparts* of the *ſame* Subſtance?

6*thly*, The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to the *intolerable* Anguiſh of its own *guilty* Conſcience. *The Spirit of a Man*, ſays *Solomon*, *can bear his Infirmities*, *but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Intimating, that of all the Paſſions which *human* Nature is *liable* to, there are none ſo *grievous* as that of a Mind awakened with the Senſe of Guilt. And of the Truth of

of this, we have ſome Experience even in this Life, though now we can make a ſhift, either to divert ourſelves, by our *ſenſual* Mirth and Jollities, from liſtening to the Clamours of our *guilty* Minds, or elſe to deceive ourſelves into a *groundleſs* Peace, by *indulgent* and *fallacious* Principles; but unleſs we expiate our Guilts here, we ſhall carry them into Eternity with us, where all thoſe *ſenſual* Pleaſures, with which we now divert ourſelves from reflecting on our Actions, will be removed, and all thoſe *fallacious* Principles, with which we cheat and deceive ourſelves, will be baffled by a *woeful* Experience. So that then our Soul will be nakedly expoſed to the Laſh of its own *furious* Thoughts, and have nothing to guard or defend itſelf againſt the *cutting* Reflections of a *guilty* Conſcience, which being rouſed up and kept awake by the *unintermitting* Senſe of our Miſery, will be always clamouring upon us, and continually torturing our *wretched* Minds with *ſharp* and *vexatious* Reflections: And beſides, whilſt our Soul doth act by *bodily* Inſtruments, and work in this Mire of Fleſh, it is *impoſſible* it ſhould be ſo *nimble* and *expedite* in its Motions, as it will be when it is a *naked* Spirit. For then its Perceptions will be much *clearer*, its Convictions more *ſtrong* and *evident*, and all its Reflections *active* as the Lightning, and *quick* as the Wing of an Angel. So that whereas now the *ſharpeſt* Stings of our Conſcience have an Intermixture of Fancy and Imagination in them, being *groſs* and *material* Powers, do dull and rebate the Edge of them, and render them leſs *pungent* and *ſenſible*; when

we are *ſtripped* out of our Fleſh, and ſent *naked* into the *other* World, we ſhall have no Clog about us to break or allay thoſe *ſharp* Reflections, with which we ſhall be forced to laſh ourſelves *for ever*. And then our Conſcience will cut to the quick, and ſting with a *corroding* Venom; then will the Remembrance of thoſe Guilts, which brought our Miſeries upon us, rouze *up* ſuch a ſwarm of Horrors in our Minds, as we ſhall be *able* neither to avoid nor endure. For the Senſe of our Miſery will be every Moment ſuggeſting thoſe Guilts to our Minds, that were the Cauſe of it, and continually upbraiding us with thoſe *deſperate* Follies, by which we ran ourſelves into it; the Conſideration of which will cauſe us to hate and curſe ourſelves *for ever*, and to diſcharge our Fury upon *our own* Heads, which will make our Soul turn Devil to itſelf, and force it to be its *own* Executioner. For it being now *conſcious* to itſelf, that its Miſeries are nothing elſe but the *rueful* and *pitileſs* Deſerts of its *own* Folly and Madneſs, it will be continually meditating *horrible* Reflections, and ſinging Satires on itſelf. So that while it is wandering among *wretched* Ghoſts through the *diſmal* Shades below, it will never ceaſe laſhing itſelf with its *own ſharp* and *ſtinging* Thoughts, till it hath chafed itſelf into a Fury, and boiled up its *ſelf-condemning* Rage into *everlaſting* Madneſs.

7thly and *laſtly*, The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to endure all theſe *diſmal* Things *for ever*: For that our Souls are naturally *immaterial* and *immortal*, I have already proved; ſo that if

if *God* in his *infinite* Juſtice ſhall think fit to ſentence *wicked* Souls irrecoverably to all theſe above-named Miſeries, they muſt, by the Conſtitution of their *own* Natures, live in, and undergo them for ever. And that he doth think to pronounce and execute ſuch a Sentence upon them, he himſelf hath aſſured us; for ſo in *Scripture* he hath plainly declared, that their Puniſhment ſhall be *everlaſting*, *Mat.* xxv. 7. *Theſe*, ſaith he, ſpeaking of the Wicked, *ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment*; and accordingly the Fire in, and with which they are to be puniſhed, is called *everlaſting Fire*, *Mat.* xxv. 41. and that they ſhall ſubſiſt for ever in this Fire, and be *co-eternal* with it, is evident by thoſe Paſſions and Actions that are attributed to them in it; for, *Rev.* xiv. 11. they are ſaid to *have no Reſt Day nor Night* in it, but to be in a *continual unintermitting* Fever, that will neceſſarily burn and ſcorch them, and not allow them the *leaſt* Intervals of Eaſe and Comfort. And in *Mat.* xiii. 42. the *bitter* Anguiſh which they ſhall endure in this Fire is deſcribed by their *weeping* and *wailing*, and *gnaſhing* their Teeth; which Actions are *plain* Indications not only of their ſubſiſting in this *everlaſting Fire*, but of the *extreme* Horror and Anguiſh that they ſhall therein endure, And indeed when *God* ſentences any *immortal* Being to Miſery, its Miſery muſt be ſuppoſed to continue as long as it lives, and conſequently to continue *for ever*, ſince it is to ſubſiſt and live *for ever*. And what a *fearful* Acceſſion is this to all thoſe above-named Miſeries? If we were to endure the *ſofteſt* and moſt *gentle*

Pain without any Interval, for *thirty*, *forty*, or an *hundred* Years, the Proſpect of that which is to *come*, would render that which is *preſent* ſo *intolerable*, that we ſhould quickly grow weary of our Lives, and wiſh ourſelves in our Graves. *Lord!* what ſhall we then do, when we come to languiſh out a *long Eternity* in the *tormenting* Agonies of *damned* Ghoſts? How will it imbitter every *preſent* Torment to us, to think of that *never-ending* Duration of Torment to come, that after we have conſumed *Millions* of *Millions* of Ages on the Rack, we have ſtill an *eternal Hell* behind, and are as far *diſtant* from the End of our Miſery, as we were when it *firſt* began? O! now if we could die, and be *inſenſible for ever!* what *welcome* Tidings would it be? How gladly ſhould we receive that *fatal* Blow, that could put an end to a *woeful* Eternity? But now it will be in vain for us to cry, *O Death, Death, have Mercy upon us, and diſpatch us quickly into an eternal Grave.* For Death is *deaf* and cannot hear, every Moment it ſtabs and wounds, but, *woe is me!* it cannot kill; it ſtrikes and ſtrikes, but cannot ſtrike home, and ſo is forced to continue as ſtruggling under the Pangs of an *immortal* Death. If there were any Proſpect of an End of our Miſery, though it were after a *Million* of Ages, this would give ſome Eaſe to the *languiſhing* Sufferer; but *never*, *never* — O how that *fatal* Word ſtabs the *wretched* Soul, and rankles its Anguiſh into *eternal* Deſperation! For to be in *extreme* Miſery, and ſee no End of it, is the Perfection of Hell, and the *utmoſt* Poſſibility of Damnation.

And

And thus have I endeavoured to repreſent unto you the *fearful* Mulcts our Souls are *liable* to in the *other* World: which are ſuch as, one would think, were *ſufficient* to awaken the moſt *ſtupid* and *inſenſible* Creature.

II. I now paſs on to the *ſecond* Thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you upon what Accounts it is that our Souls are *liable* to theſe *dreadful* Things; or what it is that expoſes us to the Danger of them. In general it is *our own* Sin and Wickedneſs, which doth not only incenſe the *holy God* againſt us, who is of *purer* Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and provoke and urge him to inflict theſe *endleſs* Miſeries upon us as the *juſt* Retributions of our *deſperate* Folly and Obſtinacy; but doth alſo, by its own *natural* Cauſality, prepare us for, and ſink us into that *miſerable* State: So that if *God* ſhould not damn us, yet *our own* Wickedneſs would; Miſery of Damnation being *little* elſe but the Perfection and Conſummation of Sin. For the Sting of *eternal*, as well as *temporal* Death, is Sin, and it is *Goodneſs* and *Wickedneſs* that makes *Heaven* and *Hell*, thoſe two *oppoſite* Hemiſpheres of the *inviſible* World; and as if *Goodneſs* were plucked out of *Heaven* it would ceaſe to be *Heaven*, and be overcaſt immediately with the *diſmal* Shades of *Hell*; ſo if *Wickedneſs* were baniſhed out of *Hell*, it would be *Hell* no longer, but preſently clear up into Light and Serenity, and ſhine forth into a *glorious Heaven*; but whereſoever Sin and Wickedneſs reigns, there is Hell and Damnation in its *neceſſary* Cauſes. Since therefore in *neceſſary* Cauſes, that which is the Cauſe of the

Cauſe is alſo the Cauſe of the Effect, our *beſt* way to be reſolved what it is that renders us *liable* to theſe *future* Miſeries, will be to enquire what it is that renders us *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* Condition at the *preſent*; for whatſoever renders us *liable* to Sin, muſt neceſſarily expoſe us to the Danger of Miſery. Now, the Danger of our falling into and continuing in a State of Sin, proceeds from theſe *following* Cauſes.

1. From the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil.*

2*dly*, From the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed.

3*dly*, From the more *cloſe* and *intimate* Acceſs which theſe Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to *Goodneſs.*

4*thly*, From the *great* Correſpondence of theſe Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Nature.

5*thly*, From the *unwearied* Diligence and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make uſe of, and apply theſe Temptations to us,

6*thly*, From the *plauſible* Pretences we are furniſhed with to *excuſe*, and *juſtify* our Compliance with them.

7*thly*, From the *extreme* Difficulty which this our Compliance brings us under to *reject* and *vanquiſh* them for the future.

1. We are *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* State. aud from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil.* If, indeed, we were neceſſarily determined to *Good*, our Happineſs would be intailed upon our Natures, and it would be as *impoſſible* for

us

us to be *miſerable*, as it is for the Fire to *freeze*, or for the Ice to *burn*; but to be ſo determined, I am apt to think is not *conſiſtent* with the Condition of a Creature. For to be *good* by a *natural* Neceſſity requires an *infallible* Underſtanding, or a Mind that is infinitely *removed* from all Poſſibility of being deceived and miſtaken; and this no *finite* Mind can be: But how ſhould the Will be in all Particulars neceſſarily determined to what is right, ſo long as it is under the Conduct of a *fallible* Mind, that hath a *natural* Poſſibility of miſleading it? So that to be *naturally*, *neceſſarily*, and *eſſentially good*, ſeems to be an *incommunicable* Prerogative of the *Divine Nature*, according to that of our Saviour, *There is none good, ſave one, and that is God*, Luke xviii. 19. For ſince no Will can be *eſſentially good* but that which is guided by an *infallible* Mind, and no Mind can be *eſſentially infallible*, but that which is *infinite* in Knowledge, it hence neceſſarily follows, that to be *free* to *Good* and *Evil* is as *natural* to *reaſonable* Creatures, as it is to be *finite* in Knowledge and Underſtanding. 'Tis true, the *greater* Light of Knowledge there is in the Mind, the *leſs* Freedom to *Evil* there muſt be in the Will, unleſs it hath ſome *antecedent* Biaſs and Inclination to *Evil*; and conſequently, the Angels being of far more *intelligent* Natures than we Men, muſt needs be naturally leſs *free* to *Evil*; but yet that even they are naturally *free* to it is evident, for that ſome of them have actually lapſed into Devils; and if they are ſo by their Natures, then much more are we by ours, who are ſo much their

Inferiors in the *rational* World. For as we are *finite* Intelligences, we muſt neceſſarily have ſome Degree of Freedom to *Evil* in us, but as we are of the *lowermoſt* Rank of Intelligences, we muſt naturally have *greater* Degrees of this Freedom in us than any *other* Order of *intelligent* Natures: And if this were all, yet this very Condition of our Natures renders us more *liable* to degenerate into an *evil* and *ſinful* State, than any *other* kind of *reaſonable* Creatures. If we were now in a State of *perfect* Innocence, yet, of all *intelligent* Creatures, we ſhould have the greateſt Reaſon to apprehend the Danger of our Fall; becauſe being the *leaſt intelligent*, we have the *greateſt* Freedom to *Evil*, and conſequently are, on that account, in the *greateſt* Danger of falling into it. By the very Condition of our Natures, we are, of all *rational* Creatures, placed *neareſt* to the Brinks of the *fatal* Precipice, and therefore have moſt Reaſon to apprehend the danger of falling *headlong* into it. For, doubtleſs, among *innocent* Creatures, there are none ſo near the Danger of ſinning, as thoſe whoſe Wills are *leaſt* reſtrained from it; and therefore, though we were now as *innocent* as the *bleſſed* Angels are, yet our Condition would be unſpeakably more *unſafe*; becauſe by how much we fall ſhort of them in Knowledge and Underſtanding, by ſo much we ſhould exceed them in our Freedom to *Evil*, and conſequently be ſo much the more *liable* to it. But this alas! is the *leaſt* of our Danger: For,

2*dly*, We are liable to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the many

many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed. For this State of Being in which we now are, being intended by *God* for our Trial and Probation, it was *requiſite*, in order thereunto, that we ſhould be placed among Difficulties, that we might have *ſufficient* Opportunity to exerciſe our Skill and Courage in *Religion*; for unleſs we had ſome ſuch Difficulties to encounter, there could no Proof or Trial be made of our Virtue. Hence therefore hath *God* placed our *rational* Souls in *mortal* Bodies, which do naturally abound with *brutiſh* Appetites and Deſires, and compaſſed us round with this World of *ſenſual* Goods and Evils, which continually importunes and excites them, that ſo we might have ſufficient Opportunity to exerciſe thoſe *human* Virtues, which conſiſt in the Dominion of our *rational* Faculties over theſe our *bodily* Appetites and Deſires, that we might never want occaſion to give the moſt *glorious* Proofs of our *Patience* and *Chaſtity*, *Temperance* and *Equanimity*, *Meekneſs* and *Sobriety*; all which are *proper* to us as Beings made up of *Soul* and *Body*, whence all thoſe *brutiſh* Appetites ariſe, in the *good* or *bad* Government whereof conſiſts the Nature of *human* Virtue and Vice. So that this *preſent* State of *human* Life is intended by *God* for the Field of Combat between *Reaſon* and *Senſe*, between the Law in our Minds, and the Law in our Members; and that the Victory of Reaſon might, through the Difficulty of it, be rendered more *glorious* and *remarkable*, he hath furniſhed its *Antagoniſt*, viz. the *bodily* Appetite, with *various* Weapons, with the Temptations of

of a World of *ſenſitive* Goods and Evils to aſſault and oppoſe it, to try its Metal, and exerciſe both its *active* and *paſſive* Virtues; and upon the Succeſs of this Combat depends the *everlaſting* Fate of the Soul. If Senſe prevail, and lead her finally Captive into Vice and Wickedneſs, ſhe is loſt *for ever*; but if Reaſon get the Victory, and finally reduce the Deſires and Appetites of Senſe, under the Dominion of Virtue, when this *mortal* Life ends ſhe ſhall triumph *for ever*, and be tranſlated hence into a *free* and *diſintangled* State, where ſhe ſhall be vexed and inticed no more with the Importunities of *ſenſual* Luſts and Affections, but to all *Eternity* enjoy the Serenity and Pleaſure of a *pure intellectual* Being. This being therefore the *true* State of Affairs, it is *too* too *obvious* how *liable* the Soul is to miſcarry, when it is placed in a Body among ſo many *brutiſh* Paſſions and Appetites, and that Body is placed in a *tempting* World, among ſo many *ſenſitive* Goods and Evils, that are continually importuning thoſe Appetites to *mutiny* againſt Reaſon, and carry us away Captive into Folly and Wickedneſs. How much Reaſon have we to look about us, when we are placed in the midſt of ſo *many* Dangers, and have ſuch *numberleſs* Snares on every ſide ready to decoy and intangle us? But this is not all neither: For,

3*dly*, We are *liable* alſo to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the more *cloſe* and *intimate* Acceſs which theſe Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to Goodneſs. For the *great* Advantage which theſe Temptations to Vice have over the moſt

moſt *powerful* Motives to Virtue is this, that they are all of them *preſent* and *ſenſible*; for as for thoſe *grand* Motives to Goodneſs, that are drawn from the Conſideration of our *future* State, they propoſe to our *Hopes* and *Fears*, thoſe Maſter-Springs of our Motions, ſuch *Goods* and *Evils* as are a *great* way *off*, and beyond the Proſpect of our *bodily* Senſes, which makes the Landſkip of them appear exceeding *dim* and *faint* upon the Mind; their Futurity, which is one ſort of Diſtance, cauſing them, like Things afar *off*, to look *confuſed* and *indiſtinct*, by reaſon of which, they cannot affect us ſo powerfully, and draw ſuch *ſtrong* and *laſting* Draughts of themſelves upon our Minds: For Goods, like Magnets, have always the *ſtrongeſt* Attractions when they are *neareſt*; but as for thoſe *inviſible* Goods of the *other* World, they are at ſuch a Diſtance from us, that they can hardly reach us, who live upon the *remoteſt* Circumference of the Sphere of their Attraction. And as Diſtance leſſens all Objects to the Eye, and renders them much *ſmaller* in Appearance than they are in Reality; ſo the *remote* Futurity of thoſe *eternal* Goods, which the Motives of Virtue do propoſe, detracts from their *juſt* Magnitude, and makes them, though unſpeakably *vaſt* in themſelves, appear exceeding *ſmall* and *inconſiderable* to our *ſhort-ſighted* Minds. And the ſame is to be ſaid of thoſe *future* Evils alſo, which they denounce againſt us; and beſides, being not only *remote*, but *inviſible* too, they cannot ſtrike upon our Senſes, by which the moſt *vigorous* Impreſſions of Things are made upon our Minds; whereas the Temptations of Vice are all

preſent

present and *sensible*, and do so circle us round as soon as we look abroad into the World, that which way soever we turn our Eyes, they are still before us, thrusting themselves into our Minds, and with their *constant* Importunity stirring and working our Desires. So that whenever these *outward* Goods or Evils do assault us, we lie *bare* and *open* to them, and they continually press so close upon our Senses, that we are not able to avoid their Impressions: When any *outward* Good invites us to a sinful Action, it hath the *vast* Advantage of being *present* and *sensible*; by reason of which, it having a more *immediate* Access to our Minds, doth many times prevail, before we can rally up a *sufficient* Strength of Considerations against it; and when we set ourselves to resist and struggle with it, the *best* of our Weapons is a Company of *thin* and *faint* Notions of Things afar *off*; Things that we never saw nor felt; which whilst we are recollecting, the Vice we are tempted to, hath its Powers ready to seize upon the Will, which having oftentimes experienced the Pleasure it invites to, is the more easily *seduced* to a *fresh* Compliance. And whilst our Enemies are so *near* us, and our Helps and Succours so far *off*, we must needs acknowledge our Danger very *great* and urgent.

4*thly*, We are *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *great* Correspondence of these Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Natures. For by reason of the Nearness and Sensibleness of those *outward worldly* Goods, by which we are continually tempted and sollicited to Evil, they having the Advantage of preingaging our Affections

Affections to them, before we arrive to the Uſe of our Reaſon; for in our *tender* Years theſe are the only Goods that we can reliſh, they are theſe that do *feed*, *clothe*, and *furniſh* us in hand with whatſoever our *natural* Appetites do gape for; that are the *ſole* Entertainment of our *childiſh* Fancies, and the only Objects our yet *unfledged* Thoughts and Deſires can reach at; and our Youth being thus entirely inured to them, by that time we are grown *up* to the Age of Reaſon, and the Capacities of Virtue and Religion, we have generally contracted ſuch an *exceſſive* Inclination towards them, and are ſo ſtrongly biaſſed with the Love of them, that whenſoever they beckon to us we are ready to follow them through all the *forbidden* Tracts that lead to *everlaſting* Ruin. For our Nature being thus *vitiated*, the Temptations *without* us have a ſtrong Party *within* us, a Party of *traiterous* Inclinations, which, upon every Summons, ſollicits us to yield, and ſurrender up our Virtue and Innocence; and no ſooner can any Temptation from *without* give the Alarm, but preſently *our own* Luſts are *up*, raiſing a Mutiny *within* us, and with the Hearts of our *corrupted* Fancy, do many times ſo diſorder our Underſtanding, that it cannot rally up its Conſiderations againſt them. For before ever our Underſtanding could be furniſhed with Conſiderations, our Hearts were prepoſſeſſed with ſuch an *exceſſive* Degree of *ambitious*, *covetous*, and *luxurious* Inclinations, that when afterwards the *Pleaſures*, *Profits* and *Honours without* begin to hold forth their *grateful* Lures to us, and to tempt us away to *Fraud* or *Treachery*, to *Vanity*

nity or *Licentiouſneſs*, thoſe *depraved* Inclinations have gotten ſuch Head *within* us, that they prove moſt commonly *too ſtrong* for all our Conſideration, and with their *impetuous* Current carry us away, and drive us *headlong* down towards *eternal* Ruin; and unleſs we put forth all the Strength of our Reaſon and Reſolution, and the Grace of *God* alſo come *in* to our Aid, it will be *impoſſible* for us to ſtem ſuch a *furious* Tide, when it is driven by the Wind of an *outward* Temptation. When therefore *our own* Inclinations do ſo vigorouſly conſpire with the Temptations *without*, to thruſt us on into Sin and Perdition, how can we be *inſenſible* of the *imminent* Danger we are in of miſcarrying for ever? But,

5thly, We are *liable* alſo to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the *unwearied* Diligence and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make uſe of, and apply theſe Temptations to us. For that the Devil doth commonly, as an *aſſiſtant Genius* to the Corruption of our Natures, excite and provoke Men to Wickedneſs, is very evident from *Scripture*; where he is ſaid *to work in the Children of Diſobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. *To fill the Heart of* Ananias *to lye to the Holy Ghoſt*, Acts v. 3. *And to take away the Word out of Mens Hearts, leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved*, Luke viii. 12. All which Expreſſions do plainly imply, that the Devil is a *conſtant* Agent in the Sins of Men. And being a *ſpiritual* Agent, he muſt needs be ſuppoſed to have a *nearer* Acceſs to the Soul than any *material* Cauſe whatſoever. For though he be totally debarred of all kind of Intercourſe with the *immediate* Operations

of

of the *reasonable* Soul, and can no more look into the Thoughts than we can into the Bowels of the Earth; yet he can easily get into the Fancy, which stands next to that *mysterious* Chamber that is open to no Eye but God's, and make what use he pleases of the *infinite* Images and *Phantasms* that are in it, and dispose, and order, and distinguish them into the Pictures of what Objects he pleases, just as the Painter doth his *numerous Colours*, that lie confusedly before him in their *several* Shells, and continue and repeat those Pictures and Representations as *long* and as *oft* as he pleases. And then considering what the *natural* Use of the Fancy is, both to the *Understanding* and *Will*, how it prompts the *one* with Matter of Invention, and supplies it with Variety of Objects to work on, and draws forth and excites the *other* to chuse or reject those Objects it presents, according as they are pleasing or displeasing; we must needs suppose that the Devil hath a *vast* Advantage of insinuating his *black* Suggestions into the Soul, by having such *free* Access into the Fancy. And accordingly he is said to *put it into the Heart of* Judas *to betray Christ*, John xiii. 2. But then he being not only a *spiritual*, but also an *intellectual* Agent, of a *vast* and *capacious* Understanding by Nature, and particularly improved in the *black* Art of Temp:ing, by a *long* Experience of his Wiles and Stratagems, having been a Tempter almost ever since he hath been an Angel; he must needs be supposed to be wonderfully *expert* and *sagacious* in it; that after having had *five thousand* Years Experience of the Methods of seducing

seducing Souls to increase and perfect his *natural* Subtilty, he must by this be fully instructed, when and how to apply himself to every Age and Constitution. For this hath been his *sole* Business, wherein he hath been infinitely *intent* and *active* ever since he became a Devil, and if from a Man, then much more from a Devil of one Business. *Good Lord deliver me*, from a Devil that for *five thousand* Years hath been continually making Experiments of Temptations, and drawing them into Rules to direct and order his *mischievous* Practice on the Souls of Men. But besides, as the Devil is of a *spirtual* and *intelligent* Nature, so he hath a *vast* Number of his *black* Angels continually roving about the World, to seduce and captivate us into Sin and Ruin. And though these *malignant* Spirits have no Ligament of *natural* Love between them to tie and oblige them to *one another*, yet, by that *perfect* Hatred which they all bear to *God* and *Men*, they are united together in an *inviolable* League, and go hand in hand with *one another*, in pursuance of their *desperate* Design, to involve our *wretched* Souls in the same *eternal* Ruin with themselves, which renders their Force so much the more *formidable*. And when we have so many *spiritual*, *subtle*, and *powerful* Adversaries combining against, and continually wandring *to* and *fro* like *roaring Lions* to devour us, we cannot but apprehend our Danger exceeding *great*; especially considering the *infinite* Temptations from *without*, that this World affords the great Variety of *sensual* Goods and Evils, which they have to object to our *carnalized* Minds. For

these

theſe *miſchievous* Spirits having ſo *great* Inſight into our Tempers, and ſo *great* a Choice of Objects to ſuggeſt to our Fancies, can never be at a Loſs how they may nick us with a *convenient* Temptation: and that which gives their Temptations a *vaſt* Advantage over us is, that we know not how to diſtinguiſh them from the Motions of *our own* Hearts: For could we ſee the Devil at our Elbows, or hear him whiſpering at our Ears every time he inſinuates his *wicked* Suggeſtions into our Minds, we ſhould doubtleſs reject them with an unſpeakable Horror; but becauſe when they are conveyed into us, we know not how to diſtinguiſh them from the *natural* Births of *our own* Minds; therefore we do make no ſcruple to *hug* and *dandle* them in our Thoughts, and entertain them with an *actual* Complacency. And when the Devil can convey his Poiſon into us in ſuch an *inviſible* manner, without diſcovering his Devil's Face; when he can thus prompt us behind the Curtain, and ſo diſguiſe his Whiſpers that we can't diſcern them from the *ſecret* Luſtings of *our own* Hearts; how can we be ſafe, without great Care and Watchfulneſs, from the Malice of ſuch a *formidable* Enemy? But,

6*thly*, We are alſo *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the *plauſible* Pretences we are furniſhed with to excuſe and juſtify our Compliance with them. When by *our own* Folly and the Devil's Malice we are actually betrayed into any *wilful* Sin, a *ſpeedy* Repentance would recover us immediately, and heal the Wound as ſoon as it is made; but inſtead of that we have a *thouſand*

plausible Excuses to palliate and skin it over; but alas! in the mean time it rots inwardly, and is festring apace into an *incurable* Gangrene. For when our Conscience begins to fly in our Faces, we have no *other* Way, but either presently to repent of, or to excuse and cloak our Wickedness; the *latter* of which is usually pitched on, as being both the most *easy*, and the most *agreeable* with our *corrupt* Inclinations. And indeed there are so many Coverts which Men have found out for their Lusts to shelter them from the Persecutions of their Consciences, that this Way there are no Men can be long to seek: for either they may blanch them over with an *innocent* Name, and call their Intemperances, *Good-fellowship*; their Knaveries, *ingenious Fetches*; and their Incontinences, *Tricks of Wit*; or else they may extenuate and mince them into *Peccadillo's*, and smooth over their *grossest* Rebellions with the softer Name of *human* Failings and Infirmities; or else they may furnish themselves with some Shew of Argument to vindicate their Vices and assert them *lawful*, as some of late have done in the Case of *Fornication* and *Uncleanness*; or else they may set up for *Philosophical* Sinners, and quote Texts out of their Gospel, *the Leviathan*, against the *eternal* Differences of *Good* and *Evil*. But if their Consciences will not be put off with such *poor* Pretences as these, there are *religious* Pretences enough in the World to protect and give Countenance to all their Impieties; and they may either fly to the *Romish* Doctrines of *Confession* and *Penance*, of *Venal Sins*, and of *probable Opinions*, with any

any one of which they may eaſily reconcile their Luſts and Conſciences: Or if they chance to have an *Antipathy* to the Name of *Roman Catholick*, they may furniſh themſelves with ſuch Doctrines out of ſome of our *modern Enthuſiaſts*, as will be as *favourable* to their Luſts as they need, or wiſh, or deſire; that will conſecrate their *irregular* Paſſions into Signs of Grace, and dwindle their *groſſeſt* Crimes into the Sports of God's People; that will exalt a *mechanick* Train of Fancies and Paſſions into a *ſincere* Converſion, and improve an *Hyſterical Fit* into a *ſpiritual Experience*. By theſe, and ſuch like ways, may Men eaſily excuſe their Vices to their Conſciences; and when they are furniſhed with ſo *many* Expedients, whereby to inable themſelves to ſin on quietly, in how much Danger are they of falling *faſt aſleep* in the midſt of their Guilts, and never waking again till they flame out about their Ears into *everlaſting Burnings?* For whereas this Faculty of Conſcience was implanted within us by the Author of our Natures, to be a Guard to our Innocence, and a Scourge to our Luſts, the generality of Men have invented ſo many Tricks to ſhift and evade it, that it is become almoſt totally *uſeleſs* to them. And when they have thus diſabled their Conſciences from defending them againſt the Importunities of their Luſts, in what *unſpeakable* Danger muſt they be, not only of *falling* into, but *continuing* in them till they have utterly ruined and deſtroyed them?

7thly, and *laſtly*, We are alſo *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal*

Miſery, from the *extreme* Difficulty which this our Compliance with thoſe Temptations brings us under, to reject and vanquiſh them for the future. For every *new* Compliance with Temptations to *Evil* foments and enrages our *evil* Inclinations, and when once theſe *evil* Inclinations are by our *cuſtomary* Compliances educated into *ſinful* Habits, it will be *impoſſible* for us, without a *mighty* Aſſiſtance of *divine* Grace, to vanquiſh and ſubdue them. So that as upon the *former* Accounts we are in extreme Danger of falling into *ſinful* Courſes, upon this Account we are in no *leſs* Danger of continuing in them. For by complying with *this* Temptation, I ſhall very much diſable myſelf from withſtanding the *next*; and if I yield to *that too*, the *third* will find me much more *ready* and *tractable*, and ſo on, till at laſt the Temptation grows firſt *familiar*, and then *natural* to me, and then it will be *hard*, and then *harder*, and then almoſt *impoſſible* to reject or deny it. And when Things are reduced to this Iſſue, that my Sin is *naturalized* to me, and grown into an inveterate Habit, *the Lord have Mercy upon me!* for now I am in the *Suburbs* of *Hell*, but one Remove from the State of the *Damned*, and am ſo far gone in a *confirmed* State of Impiety, that I have almoſt loſt my Liberty of returning; and unleſs I am ſpeedily reſcued by ſome Miracle of Grace it is *morally impoſſible* I ſhould ever eſcape. Thus as we go on from *one* Degree of Wickedneſs to *another*, we do as it were break down the Bridge behind us, and do what in us lies to diſappoint ourſelves of all Hopes of any *future* Retreat. For every

Step

Step *forwards* in our *ſinful* Progreſs, renders our Return more *difficult*; and when once we have proceeded into a Cuſtom and Habit of Sin, we ſhall find Repentance ſo *irkſome* to us, and ſo much againſt the Grain of our Nature, that it is a thouſand to one but that the Difficulty of it will utterly diſhearten us from attempting it; and ſo rather than take ſo much Pains as we muſt neceſſarily do in ſwimming againſt the *impetuous* Stream of our Natures, we ſhall tamely yield to it, and ſuffer ourſelves to be borne down by it into the *dead Sea* of *endleſs* Miſery. When therefore there are ſo many Cauſes conſpiring together to betray us into *ſinful* Courſes, and when there are ſo many Difficulties when once we are *in* to oppoſe and hinder our Retreat, what *imminent* Danger are we in of falling into, and perſevering in Sin to our *everlaſting* Ruin? And thus you ſee how extremely *liable* we are upon all theſe Accounts to be *loſt for ever*, that is, to plunge ourſelves into all thoſe *endleſs* Miſeries which the Loſs of our Souls implies.

What then remains, but that being ſeriouſly affected with the Senſe of our Danger, we preſently awake out of our Security, and with the *deepeſt* Concern for our *immortal* Souls, cry out with St. *Peter*'s Auditors, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* Verily, when I reflect upon the *ſtrange* Unconcernedneſs of Men about their *future* Condition, I am tempted to think either that they do not believe that they have an *immortal* Soul in them, or that if they do, they believe it is *impoſſible* it ſhould *for ever* miſ-

carry. For how is it *conceivable* that Men, who in *other* Matters are ſo *ſollicitous* when their Intereſt is at ſtake, and expoſed to the *leaſt* Hazard, ſhould believe that they have Souls in Danger of periſhing *for ever*, and yet take no more Care or Regard of them, but (like the *forgetful* Mother, who, when her Houſe was on fire, to ſave her Goods, forgot her Child) lay out all their Thoughts upon the *little* Concerns of this *frail* and *mortal* Life, and in the mean time forget their *precious* Souls, and leave them periſhing in the Flames of Perdition? O *ſtupid* Creature! what art thou made of that canſt conſider that thou haſt an *immortal* Soul, ſurrounded with ſo many Dangers of being loſt *for ever*, and yet be no more concerned for its Preſervation? Methinks if thou hadſt any Senſe in thee, having a Proſpect of ſuch *endleſs* Miſeries before thee, the *remoteſt* Poſſibility of falling into them, ſhould be enongh to ſtartle and awake thee; but when thou art ſo near the Brink of thoſe Miſeries, and haſt ſo many Cauſes round about thee ſhoving thee forward, and thruſting thee *headlong* down into them, and yet be no more concerned at it, is ſuch a Prodigy of *ſenſeleſs* Stupidity, as Heaven and Earth may juſtly be aſtoniſhed at. 'Tis true, if the Danger thou art in were ſuch as is *impoſſible* to be evaded, it would then be the *wiſeſt* Courſe thou could'ſt take to concern thyſelf as *little* as may be about it; but rather to live merrily whilſt thou may'ſt, and not *antedate* thy Miſery, by thinking of the *diſmal* Futurity. But *God* be praiſed this is not our Caſe, though our Condition be *dangerous*, yet

it

it is far from *desperate*; for if we will use our *honest* Endeavour, and vigorously exert the Faculties of our Natures, we not only may, but shall escape. There are indeed a *great* many Causes of our Danger, a *great* many Enemies concurring to our Ruin, but none of these are able to affect it, unless we ourselves join Hands in the *fatal* Conspiracy: If we will be but *faithful* Friends to ourselves, and true to our own *eternal* Interest, it will be beyond the Power of all those Causes together to do us any *material* Injury. For *blessed* be the *good God*, those that are for us, are far *greater* and *mightier* than those that are against us; against us we have the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*, the *weakest* of which is, I confess, a *dangerous* and *puissant* Enemy; but for us, we have *God* and *Angels*, and *our own* Reason, assisted with the most *invincible* Motives, with *vast* and *glorious* Promises, that stand beckoning to us with Crowns of Immortality in their Hands, to call us *off* from the Pursuit of our Lusts to the Practice of Virtue and Religion; with *direful* Threatenings, that are continually alarming and warning us of the *dreadful* Consequents of our Sins; and sundry other such *mighty*, I had almost said *Almighty* Motives, as, if we would seriously attend to, would certainly render our Souls *impregnable* against all the Temptations of Vice. And besides our Reason thus armed and accoutred, we have on our side the *Holy* Angels of *God*, who are always ready to prompt us, and to assist us in our Duty, and to *second* us in all our *spiritual* Combats against the Enemies of our Souls. And besides all these,

we have with us the *Almighty Spirit* of *God*, who upon our ſincere Deſires and *honeſt* Endeavours is engaged to aid us, and *co-operate* with us in working out our Salvation; whoſe Grace is abundantly *ſufficient* for us, to ſtrengthen us in our Weakneſs, to ſupport us under our *greateſt* Difficulties, and carry us on victoriouſly through the moſt *violent* Temptations. And being backed with ſuch *mighty* Auxiliaries, how is it *poſſible* that we ſhould miſcarry, unleſs we are reſolved to betray *ourſelves*, and give Fire to to the *fatal* Trains of our Enemies; and if we are ſo bent, there is no Remedy for our Obſtinacy, and it is *juſt* and *fit* we ſhould be left to the *diſmal* and *pitileſs* Effects of *our own* Folly and Madneſs. For if when we ſee ourſelves in ſo much danger, and it is yet in our Power to eſcape if we pleaſe, we will notwithſtanding *precipitate* ourſelves into Ruin; all the World muſt agree upon an *impartial* Inquiſition for the Blood of our Souls, that we *murdered* ourſelves, that *God* is *juſt*, and that his Hands are *clean* from any Stain of our Blood, and that *our own* Ruin is wholly owing to our own *invincible* Obſtinacy.

III. I proceed now to the *Third* Propoſition, *That our renouncing of Chriſt, and his Religion, will moſt certainly infer the Loſs of our Souls.* For, as I have ſhewed you, theſe Words are urged by our *Saviour* as a Motive to deter his Diſciples from forſaking him, as is plain from *Ver.* 24. 25. which neceſſarily ſuppoſes that upon their forſaking him, their Loſs would moſt certainly and inevitably follow. In the Proſecution therefore of this Argument, I ſhall endeavour theſe *two* Things. 1.

1. To ſhew you what that forſaking of Chriſt is, which infers this Loſs.

2. Upon what Accounts our thus forſaking him infers it.

1. What that forſaking of *Chriſt* is, which infers this Loſs. To which I anſwer, there is a *fourfold Forſaking of Chriſt*, which the *Scripture* takes notice of as *capital* and *damnable* to the Souls of Men.

1. When we *forſake* him by a *total* Apoſtacy.

2*dly*, When we cowardly *renounce* the Profeſſion of his Doctrine, or any Part of it, notwithſtanding we ſtill believe and are convinced of the Truth of it.

3*dly*, When by *obſtinate* Hereſy we either add to, or ſubtract from the Faith of *Chriſt*.

4*thly*, When by any *wilful* Courſe of Diſobedience we do virtually *renounce* the Authority of his Laws.

1. We loſe and forfeit our Souls, when we forſake Chriſt by a *total* Apoſtacy from him: When after we have been baptized into his Name, and thereby have made a *viſible* Profeſſion of our believing his Doctrines, and obeying his Laws, we turn Renegadoes, and caſt *off* our Belief of the *one*, and diſown our Obligation to the *other*; we do moſt juſtly incur the Loſs and Forfeiture of our Souls. For ſo *ſtrong* and *cogent* is the Evidence of *Chriſtianity*, that it is not to be ſuppoſed that any *profeſſed Chriſtian* can be either innocently or excuſably ſeduced into a Diſbelief of it; for *Religion* being a Matter of the *vaſteſt* Moment and Concern, he is a Traitor to himſelf, that either takes up his

his *Religion* without Examination, or that upon Examination refuſes to be ſwayed by the *ſtrongeſt* Reaſon; and I am ſure it is *impoſſible* for any *Chriſtian* to turn *Infidel*, that is but ſo *honeſt* to himſelf as *firſt* to examine carefully the Reaſons of his Faith, and then to reſolve ſincerly not to reject it, till better Reaſons appear to the contrary: But if either through their *wilful* Ignorance of the Evidence of *Chriſtianity*, or *vicious* Prejudice againſt the Purity of it, they ſuffer themſelves to be ſeduced into *Apoſtacy*, they are *falſe* Traitors to themſelves, and as ſuch are juſtly *liable* to all thoſe *eternal* Damages they expoſe themſelves to. And hence it is ſaid of thoſe that *draw back*, that is, *apoſtatize* from *Chriſtianity* not only that God's Soul ſhall have *no Pleaſure in them*, but alſo that they *draw back to Perdition.* Heb. x. 38, 39. and 2 Pet. ii. 20. It is ſaid of thoſe *Apoſtates*, that *their latter End is worſe than the Beginning*; *and that it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment*; which implies, that *Apoſtates* from *Chriſtianity* do not only forfeit their Souls, but that, without Repentance, they will be *for ever* forfeited to the moſt *wretched* Condition, even to the *nethermoſt* Degree of Perdition.

2*dly*, We loſe our Souls, when notwithſtanding we do ſtill believe, and are convinced of the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine, we do cowardly *renounce* the Profeſſion of it, or any Part of it. For when once we have received the Faith of *Chriſt*, we are thereby obliged not to renounce the

the Profeſſion of it, whatſoever Hazard it may expoſe us to, our *bleſſed Lord* having aſſured us, that if we *deny him before Men, he will alſo deny us before his Father which is in Heaven.* Mat. x. 33. And St. *Paul* alſo having warned us, *that if we deny Chriſt, he will alſo deny us*, 2 Tim. ii. 12. That is, that he will reject and abandon us before God and Angels to *everlaſting* Miſery and Damnation; for ſo St. *John* aſſures us, *Rev.* ii. 8. that the *Fearful* and *Unbelieving*, *i e.* the *faint-hearted* Cowards that, for fear of Perſecution, renounce the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, *ſhall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone.* Not that in Times of Perſecution we are always bound to make an *actual* Profeſſion and Publication of our Faith, to run to the Tribunals of our Perſecutors, before we are ſent for, and accuſe ourſelves of thoſe Doctrines for which we are perſecuted; but whenever we are *apprehended*, *accuſed* and *examined* by them, either upon Knowledge or Suſpicion, we are bound, under the Penalty of *forfeiting* our Souls, to *own* and *confeſs* our Faith, and not to deny any Doctrine or Article of it, whatſoever the Conſequence may be. For, in this caſe, to deny our Belief is not only a *wilful* Lye, which is in itſelf a *damnable* Crime, but an Act of *High Treaſon* againſt our *Lord* and *Saviour*; for by renouncing any Doctrine which he hath revealed and committed to us, we do not only betray his Truſt, but blaſpheme his Veracity; to deny what we believe he hath revealed, being in effect to declare him a Cheat and Impoſtor. And having thus incurred the Guilt of ſo *black* a Treaſon

Treaſon againſt our *Saviour*, and wilfully perſiſting in it, what can we expect the Conſequence of it ſhould be, but the *eternal* Loſs and Perdition of our Souls?

3*dly*, We forſake *Chriſt* to the Loſs and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by *obſtinate* Hereſy we add to, or ſubtract from that *heavenly* Doctrine which he hath revealed to us. By *Hereſy* I do not mean barely a *falſe* Opinion in our *Religion*, whether it be of *greater* or *leſſer* Moment; for I doubt not but the ſame Error may be an *innocent* Miſtake in *one* Man, and a *damnable* Hereſy in *another*; that in the *one* it may be the Effect of a *weak* Underſtanding, but in the *other*, of a *perverſe* and *obſtinate* Will; and when the Underſtanding miſleads the Will it is Weakneſs, but when the Will miſleads the Underſtanding it is Wickedneſs. For *ſimple* Error is only a Defect of Underſtanding, which, in a *fallable* Creature, is every whit as *inculpable* as Sickneſs in a *mortal one*; but Hereſy is a Fault of the Will, which is the only Subject of Virtue and Vice. When therefore, by the *wicked* Prejudice of our *corrupt* Wills againſt the Purity of *Chriſtianity*, our Underſtanding is betrayed into *looſe* and *erroneous* Principles; when we underſtand by our *vicious* Affections, and adapt our Opinions to the Intereſts of our Luſts; when we believe for the ſake of any *darling* Vice, and ſuffer *our own factious*, *covetous*, and *extravagant* Paſſions, either to tempt us to profeſs thoſe *erroneous* Opinions which we do not believe, or to prejudice us into a Belief of them; then is our Error no longer to be attributed to the Weakneſs

neſs of our Underſtanding, but to the Wickedneſs of our Wills, which improves our Error into a *damnable* Hereſy. For he would be a *wicked* Man, though he were not an Heretick, that harbours thoſe *ſinful* Luſts, which betrayed him into Hereſy; but by being an Heretick he is much more *wicked*, becauſe now he is *wicked* under a Pretence of Religion, and cloaks his Impieties with the Garments of Righteouſneſs. And what *greater* Profaneneſs can any Man be guilty of, than to make his *Religion* a Bawd to procure for his Luſts? So that if out of a *vicious* Propenſion of Will, we obſtinately perſiſt in any *religious* Errors, we are not only guilty of that *wicked* Propenſion, which is of itſelf *ſufficient* to ruin our Souls, but we are alſo *accountable* for *vitiating* our *Religion* with thoſe *erroneous* Mixtures, by which we have rendered it a Shelter and Protection to our Luſt. And what the Conſequence of this will be St. *Jude* will inform us, who ſpeaking of *certain* Hereticks, who, to gratify their own *wicked* Inclinations, had *ſophiſticated Chriſtianity* with ſundry *black* and *poiſonous* Principles, pronounces this *fearful* Doom on them; *for whom is reſerved the Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever*, ver. 13.

4thly, and *laſtly*, We forſake *Chriſt* to the Loſs and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by any *wilful* Courſe of Diſobedience we do virtually renounce the Authority of his Laws. For whilſt we continue in any courſe of *wilful* Sin, we live in an *open* Rebellion to our *Saviour*, and do, by our Actions, declare that we will not have him to reign over us. And accordingly,

Tit.

Tit. i. 16. the *abominable* and *disobedient* are said to *deny God in their Works*, even while they profess *to know him*; and what the Fate of such will be, St. *Paul* hath forewarned us. *Rom.* ii. 8, 9, *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* And the same *Apostle* speaking of these *obstinate* Rebels, who live and persist in an *open* Defiance to our Saviour's Authority, tells us, *that they shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord*, 2 Thes. i. 8, 9. But before we dismiss this Argument, it will be requisite more particularly to explain what those *wilful* Courses of Sin are by which they thus renounce him; all which may be reduced to these *three* Heads. *First*, We renounce the Authority of his Laws, when we sin against him out of *wilful* Ignorance of them. *Secondly*, When we sin on against him out of *wilful* Inconsideration of our Obligation to them. *Thirdly*, When we persist in our Sin against Knowledge and Consideration.

1. We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we sin on against him out of *wilful* Ignorance of his Laws. For the Laws of our *Saviour*, in which the great Lines of our Duty are described, are so *plain* and *legible*, that no Man can be long excusably *ignorant* of them. But if our Ignorance proceed either *first* from a *profane* and *profligate* Mind, that is altogether regardless of *God*, and hath utterly worn *off* its *natural* Sense of Religion, and so neither

neither heeds it nor concerns itself about it, but is become quite *deaf* to all the Means of Instruction; or if it proceed, *secondly*, from the *vicious* Prejudice of our Wills, and we industriously set ourselves for the sake of some *darling* Lust, to exclude from our Minds all the Means of Conviction; and either studiously to avoid all Thoughts of *Religion*, that we may sin on without Disturbance, which is the way of those that are openly *profane* and *irreligious*; or to use all *possible* Arts to wheedle our Understandings into the Belief of such Principles as are most *indulgent* to our Lusts, which is the way of *Hypocrites* and *false Pretenders* to *Religion*. If, I say, our Ignorance of Christ's Laws proceed from either of these Causes, it will no more excuse our falling into Sin, than the want of Light will a Man's falling into a Ditch that shuts his Eyes at Noon, and winks on purpose, lest he should see, and escape the Danger that is before him. But then,

2*dly*, We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we sin on against him out of a *wilful* Inconsideration of our Obligations to obey him. For we being *reasonable* Creatures, are bound, by the very Constitution of our Natures, to act considerately, especially in Matters of *Religion*, which are of the *greatest* Moment and Importance to us; so that if we miscarry herein through *wilful* Inconsideration, we are every whit as *inexcusable* as if we had considerately betrayed ourselves. Now *wilful* Inconsideration is either *actual* or *habitual*; *actual* is either, *first*, when notwithstanding we have been sufficiently warned by

precedent

precedent Surprizes, we take no care for the *future*; for though it cannot be expected we should always keep so *strict* a Guard upon ourselves, as never to be surprized by an Enemy; yet when we have been overtaken, there is all the Reason in the World we should take warning by it, and grow more *wary* and *vigilant* for the future; that we should awaken in our Minds such Considerations as are *necessary* to prevent our being surprized again, which if we do not, our *next* Surprize will be *inexcusable*. And if the Sense of the *Lapse*, which was perhaps but an *innocent* Error, or at most but a Sin of Infirmity, doth not make us more *careful* of ourselves for the future; the *next* will be a *wilful* Fall: Or else, in the *second* Place, this *actual wilful* Inconsideration is, when, upon the *presenting* of any *beloved* Temptation, we either quench the *good* Motions of our Minds, and refuse to consider the Evil and Danger of the Sin we are tempted to, lest we should be thereby deterred from committing it; or purposely contrive to baffle *our own* Consideration, by opposing it either with some *ungrounded* Hope of Impunity, or some *fallacious* Promise of *future* Amendment; and if to make way for our Sin, we do either of these Ways wilfully drive all good Thoughts from our Minds, lest they should disturb and interrupt us in the Enjoyment of it, our Inconsideration is to be resolved into the Wickedness of our Wills, and not into the Weakness and Infirmity of our Natures. And he that will not consider because he will sin, and afterwards extenuate his Sin by his Inconsideration, urges *one* Sin in excuse for another

another, and makes that which is his Fault his Apology. Whenſoever therefore we ſin out of any *actual* and *wilful* Inconſideration, we ſin wilfully, and conſequently do thereby virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*; the *final* Event of which, without our Repentance, will be our *everlaſting* Ruin and Perdition. But then beſides this *actual*, there is alſo an *habitual* Inconſideration, which is *wilful*; and that is, when by often ſtifling the Convictions of our Conſciences, we have ſeared them into a *deep* Inſenſibility of *Good* and *Evil*, ſo as that now we ſin on without any Remorſe or Reluctancy, and return to our Luſts with the ſame Indifferency as we do to our Beds or our Tables, without either conſidering what we are doing, or reflecting on what we have done; and this is ſo far from palliating our Sin, that it is one of the *higheſt* Aggravations of it: For as it is no Excuſe that we ſin out of an *evil* Habit, which we voluntarily contracted by *frequent* Acts of Sin, ſo neither will it at all excuſe us that we ſin out of an *habitual* Inconſideration, which we *wilfully* contracted by often refuſing to conſider. But as *vicious* Habits have a *proper* Evil and Guiltineſs in them *diſtinct* from thoſe *vicious* Acts that produced them; ſo *habitual* Inconſideration hath in it a *peculiar* Venom of its own, beyond what was in thoſe *actual* Inconſiderations whereby it was acquired. And accordingly it is deſcribed in the *Scripture* as the *worſt*, the moſt *deſperate* and *incurable* State of a Sinner: It is called a *reprobate Mind*, Rom. i. 28, 29. *a ſeared Conſcience*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. *a hard and unrelenting Heart that treaſureth*

sureth up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, Rom. ii. 5. So that if we go on in Sin without considering, with a Mind habitually *regardless* and *insensible*, we are *hardened* and *inveterate* Rebels, that have not only renounced the Authority of our *Saviour*, but have also forfeited ourselves, and that almost irreparably, against all his Methods of conquering and subduing us. But then,

3*dly* and *lastly*, We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we persist in our Sin against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*. For to sin on obstinately against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, argues an *invincible* Malice of Will; for though the Condition of the *ignorant* and *inconsiderate* Sinner be very *sad* and *deplorable*, yet there is much more Hope of him, because he hath never yet had the Force and Efficacy of *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, which, perhaps, if ever he be brought to experience, may *prove* a *successful* Means of his Cure and Reformation. But the *knowing* and *considerate* Sinner hath tried and conquered the Remedy, hath experimented the only Means of his Cure, and yet it grows *worse* and *worse* under the Application; he knows what his Sin is, and considers the Consequence of it, and yet sins on; which argues a *desperate* Resolution of Will in him, thus to run himself upon a *foreseen* Ruin, and leap into *Hell* with his Eyes open. And what Hope is there of dissuading *him* from his Sin, that knows and considers the Arguments against it, and every Day breaks through them all, at the Call of every *sinful* Temptation? And as his Condition is most

moſt *deſperate*, ſo his Soul is moſt *guilty* and *criminal*; for every Act of his Sin is an *open* Defiance to the Authority of *God* and his *Saviour*; his Rebellion is *barefaced*, and hath no manner of Pretence wherein to maſk or diſguiſe itſelf; and he knows and owns himſelf to be in a Rebellion, and yet perſeveres in it, which extremely aggravates and enhances the Guilt of it. For the *Sinfulneſs* and *Immorality* of Actions are to be meaſured by the Degrees of Will that are in them, and the Degrees of Will in them are *more* or *leſs* proportionably, as the Nature and Evil of them are *more* or *leſs* known and conſidered. Hence is that of St. *James* iv. 17. *To him that knoweth to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin.* Had he not known the Nature of his Action, the Weakneſs of his Underſtanding would have excuſed the Error of his Will, and rendered it *pardonable* at leaſt, if not altogether *innocent:* But when his Underſtanding hath diſcharged its Office, and ſhewed him the Evil that he ought to avoid, *that* hath fairly acquitted itſelf, and can ſtand no longer *chargeable* for his Miſcarriages: So that now the Man chuſes his own Peril, and if he ſtill chuſe what he ought to avoid, his Underſtanding is *clear*, and his Will alone is *culpable*. And when our Rebellion againſt our *Saviour* is not only *wilful*, but the *Wilfulneſs* of it is ſo extremely *aggravated* by our Knowledge and Conſideration, what the Conſequence of it will be, that *fearful* Paſſage will aſſure us, *Luke*, xii. 47. *The Servant that knoweth his Maſters Will and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes.* And thus I have endea-

voured to repreſent to you what that forſaking of Chriſt is, which expoſes us to the Hazard of loſing our Souls.

II. I proceed, in the *next* Place, to ſhew you upon what Accounts it is that our *forſaking of Chriſt* infers this *fearful* Loſs; of which, I ſhall briefly give you this *four-fold* Account.

1. Our thus *forſaking of Chriſt* infers the Loſs of our Souls, as it is a moſt *inexcuſable* Contempt of the *greateſt* Mercy.

2*dly*, As it renders us the moſt *unfitting* Objects of Mercy for the future.

3*dly*, As it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *ſtated* Condition of Mercy.

4*thly*, As it is an *utter* Rejection of our *laſt* Remedy.

1. Our forſaking of Chriſt, by any of the *afore-named* Inſtances, infers the *everlaſting* Loſs of our Souls, as it is a moſt *inexcuſable* Contempt of the *greateſt* Mercy. For when the *Son* of *God* came down from *Heaven*, he brought from thence with him the *largeſt* Offers of Mercy that *Heaven* itſelf could make to a *ſinful* World; he did not only bring down with him a Grant of *univerſal* Pardon and Indemnity, under the *Broad-Seal* of *Heaven*, for every Sinner that would lay down his Arms, and return to his Allegiance, together with the moſt *endearing* Invitations of the *God* of *Heaven*, to *woo* and *win* us to accept it; but he alſo brought along with him all that an *everlaſting* Heaven means, Crowns of *immortal* Glory and Pleaſure, to encourage us to, and reward our Acceptance of them. And what greater Mercy could the *God* of *Heaven* have expreſſed to us, than

than to ſend down his *bleſſed Son*, not only to tender to us an Indemnity, but alſo to invite us to accept it with a Promiſe of Heaven? So that if now we reject him, now he is come to us with ſuch *vaſt* and *endearing* Propoſals, what an *intolerable* Slight will it be to the tender Mercies of *God*, when we ſhall declare by our Actions that we will not exchange the ſordid Pleaſures of our Luſt for the Pardon of *Heaven*, for the Favour of *God*, and for all the Hopes of a *glorious* Immortality? How can we expect any *farther* Relief from God's Mercy, after we have put ſuch an *intolerable* Affront upon it by preferring ſuch an *unworthy* Rival before it? When *God* hath laid his Pardon, his Love, and his *Heaven* in our Way, to ſtop us in our *ſinful* Courſes, what a *barbarous* Indignity will it be to trample upon them all, and run over them into Hell? With what Face can we hope for any *farther* Kindneſs from *Heaven*, after we have treated its Kindneſs with ſo much Rudeneſs and Contempt? Certainly for *ſinful* Men to reject and run away from their *Saviour*, when he comes to them with ſo much Kindneſs, when he courts them with ſuch *aſtoniſhing* Expreſſions of Mercy, is a Provocation *ſufficient* to incenſe an *infinite* Goodneſs, and turn the tendereſt Mercy into an *implacable* Fury. When *infinite* Love is ſo infinitely provoked, what leſs Expiation can it claim and exact, than the *everlaſting* Ruin and Perdition of our Souls?

2*dly*, Our *Forſaking of Chriſt* infers the *everlaſting* Loſs of our Souls, as it renders us the moſt *incapable* Objects of Mercy for the future. For when we are arrived to that Height of

Wickedneſs as finally to reject *Chriſt*, and the Mercies of his *Goſpel*, there is no farther Mercy that we are *capable* of; if after this God ſhould be ſo *kind* and *indulgent* as to pardon us, alas! What would it ſignify? for we ſhould ſtill be *wretched* and *miſerable* in Deſpight of his Pardon; and that *wicked* Temper of Mind which made us reject our *Saviour*, would be an *everlaſting* Hell to us, though it ſhould indemnify us. What will a Pardon avail a Man that is dying of the *Stone* or *Strangury?* He can but die if he be not pardoned, and die he muſt tho' he be. And as *little* Advantage it would be to a *wicked* Soul to be pardoned and abſolved by *God*, while ſhe hath a Diſeaſe within her that preys upon her Vitals, and haſtens her to a *certain* Ruin. She could have been but *miſerable* in the *future* Life if ſhe had not been pardoned, and *miſerable* ſhe muſt be if ſhe continues *wicked*, whether ſhe be pardoned or no; there being an *everlaſting Hell* in the very Nature of Wickedneſs, which no *outward* Act of Pardon can quench or extinguiſh. Nay, if after our rejecting *Chriſt*, and the Mercies of the *Goſpel*, God ſhould not only Pardon, but admit us into *Heaven*, and indulge us the *free* Enjoyment of all its Pleaſures and Felicities; yet that *vicious* Temper of Mind which finally *ſeduced* us from our *Saviour*, would render us for ever *incapable* of reliſhing the Joys of it. Thoſe Rivers of *heavenly* Pleaſure would never agree with the *helliſh* Temper of our Minds, which, like a *feveriſh* Tongue, would utterly diſguſt their *delicious* Streams by Reaſon of its own *overflowing* Gall. So that after we have finally rejected

jected our Saviour, we are neither *capable* of being indemnified from *Hell*, nor of enjoying *Heaven*; and having caſt ourſelves beyond the Reach of all Mercy, into a State wherein we can neither begin to be *happy*, nor ceaſe to be *miſerable*, our Caſe is *deſperate*, and there is no Remedy, but our Souls muſt be loſt and undone *for ever*.

3*dly*, Our forſaking of *Chriſt* infers the *everlaſting* Loſs of our Souls, as it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *ſtated* Condition of Mercy. The *fixed* and *immoveable* Condition of the Mercy of the *Goſpel* is, that we ſhould conſtantly adhere to our *Saviour* by a *true* Faith and a *ſincere* Obedience, and that whenever we fall *off* from him, either into Infidelity, or Hereſy, or Diſobedience, we ſhould remember from whence we are fallen, and return again to him by a *deep* and *ſerious* Repentance. And indeed this Condition is ſo *low* and *condeſcending*, that it was *impoſſible* for the *wiſe* God and Governor of the World, to propoſe his Mercy to us at a *lower* or *eaſier* Rate; and if God ſhould have aſked our Conſent upon what Conditions he ſhould propoſe to us the Mercies of his *Goſpel*, this would have been the *utmoſt* Favour that we could in Modeſty have craved of him, that he would be ſo gracious as to accept our *unfeigned* Faith and *ſincere* Obedience; and that whenever we fall off either from the *one* or the *other*, he would admit us to Repentance, and receive us again upon our Return and Amendment. And ſhould he have propoſed his Mercy to us upon *lower* Terms, he muſt of Neceſſity have let go the Reigns of his

Government, and given us a *free* Toleration for all manner of Wickedness. Had the Condition of his Mercy been but one Step *lower* than Repentance, it had totally dissolved the Obligation of his Laws, and reduced the *human* World into a *perfect Anarchy*. For should he have prostituted his Mercy to *impenitent* Sinners, he must have made it a Refuge for *obstinate* Rebels to fly to, and shelter themselves from the Reach of his Authority; and how *inconsistent* would this have been with the Wisdom of his Government? This therefore being the *lowest* Condition upon which the *wise* and *holy God* can propose his Mercy to us, there is no Ground to hope that after we have rejected *this*, and are finally fallen *off* from it, he will make any *new* Proposal to us. For he hath yielded as much already to the Weakness and Inconstancy of our Natures, as he could possibly do with Safety to his Government; and if this will not suffice, we may depend upon it, that he will rather consent to sacrifice our Souls to his *righteous* Vengeance, than his *own* Authority to our *obstinate* Wills. So that when once we have finally rejected our *Saviour*, and shaken Hands *for ever* with Faith and Obedience, and Repentance too, we are quite beyond the Reach of any *wise* Mercy; and then how *deplorable* must our Condition be, when things are reduced to this *desperate* Issue, that God must either consent to be foolishly *merciful* to us, or to abandon our Souls to *everlasting* Perdition?

4*thly* and *lastly*, Our *forsaking of Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is an *utter*

utter Rejection of our *laſt* Remedy. For the *laſt* Remedy which *God* hath prepared for Mankind to heal the Malignity of their Natures, and recover them from *eternal* Miſery, is the *meritorious* Death and Sacrifice of his *Bleſſed Son*, who voluntarily undertaking to be the *Attorney General*, and *Common Repreſentative* of *ſinful* Men, ſuffered Death in our ſtead as a *vicarious* Mulct and Puniſhment for our Sins; upon which the moſt *merciful* Father hath granted to all *believing* and *truly penitent* Sinners a *general* Indemnity from *eternal* Puniſhments, to which they were bound over by their Sins and Rebellions; by virtue of which Grant, as ſoon as we believe in *Chriſt*, and do thereupon ſincerely repent of our Sins, we are totally abſolved from thoſe *everlaſting* Puniſhments whereunto they have expoſed and obliged us. And this Sacrifice of *Chriſt*, being the laſt Remedy which *God* hath provided for our *Guilt*, and the Grant of Pardon *God* hath made in Conſideration of it, being confined to *believing* and *penitent* Sinners, it hence neceſſarily follows, that they who finally perſiſt in *Unbelief* or *Impenitency*, do thereby *for ever* cut themſelves off from all Intereſt in that Sacrifice; and from all Title to that Pardon that is granted upon it, and conſequently leave themſelves *for ever* deſtitute of all Hope of Pardon and Indemnity for the future. So that by renouncing *Chriſt* we do renounce his Sacrifice, which is the *laſt* and *only* Remedy we have to depend upon. Hence, *Heb.* x. 26. we are told, that *if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more*

more sacrifice for Sin; that is, if after we have been baptized, and initiated into *Christianity*, we relapse into Infidelity or *wilful* Disobedience, we do thereby forfeit our Interest in Christ's Sacrifice; and when we have once rejected our Interest in that, there remains no other Sacrifice for Sin, *i. e.* no other Sacrifice upon which *God* will pardon and indemnify us. So that now all that remains to us, is that which follows in the next Verse, *viz.* *A certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* For when we have finally baffled our *last* and *utmost* Remedy, the Condition of our Souls must needs be *desperate* and *incurable*. When by our *obstinate* Unbelief or *final* Impenitence we have *out-sinned* the Virtue of our Saviour's Sacrifice, we are out of the Reach and Compass of God's Pardon, and so consequently are sunk beyond all Hopes of Recovery, into *endless* and *irreversible* Damnation. For now that *precious* Blood, which, if we had believed and repented, would have spoke *better* things for us than the Blood of *Abel*, will rise in Judgment against us, and, like the Blood of those Souls that are under the Altar, will charge and impeach, and be continually imprecating the Vengeance of *Heaven* upon us. And when that which was prepared for the *last* and *utmost* Remedy of our Souls shall be converted into that Bane, and that which was intended for their Advocate shall become their Accuser; when that *vocal* Blood and those *speaking* Wounds which pleaded for, shall plead against, and cry out instantly for Judgment upon them; what can they hence-

forth

forth expect but *everlasting* Ruin and Destruction?

What then remains, but that since our *forsaking of Christ* will so infallibly infer the Ruin of our Souls, we all return to, and cleave *fast* to our *Saviour* in our Belief and Obedience: That we who are fallen *off* from him into a Course of *wilful* Sin and Disobedience, immediately return again by a *deep* and *serious* Repentance. For the Way in which we are walking leads directly to Destruction; every Step of it is a Descent into Hell, and next to the *lowermost* is the *bottomless* Pit, and for all we know, the very *last* Step we took brought us to the Brinks of the flaming Abyss; and if we did, one Step further will set us beyond all Hope of Recovery. For in our *sinful* Progress we are wading forwards in a *shelving Pool*, which the farther we go, the *deeper* it is, and so *deeper* and *deeper* till we come to the Bottom of it; so that at every Step we are in Danger of going beyond our Depth, and plunging ourselves into an *irrecoverable* Ruin; for we know not how soon we may be snatched away in our Iniquities; and if it should so happen, that after we have sinned *this* Moment, we should die the next, this will determine our *everlasting* Fate, and sink us into *eternal* Misery.

Wherefore as we tender the Safety of our *precious* Souls, let us speedily forsake this *dangerous* Road in which Perdition *way-lays*, and *Hell* gapes to devour us every Step we go; and return unto our Lord in whom our Safety lies. As yet the Opportunity of Salvation is in our Hands, but before to-morrow Morning it may slip

ſlip away from between our Fingers, and vaniſh *for ever*, and we that are *this* Day wallowing in our Sins, may before the *next* be roaring in *Hell*. So that while we defer and put *off* our Repentance from Day to Day, we do as it were caſt Lots for our Souls, and venture our *everlaſting* Hopes upon a Contingency, that is not in our power to diſpoſe of. As yet the Gate of Mercy is open to us, and our *bleſſed Lord* ſtands ready with his Arms *out-ſtretched* to welcome and receive us; but for all we know, if we enter not preſently, the Gate may be ſhut within a *few* Moments, and then though we knock and cry till our Hearts ake, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, we ſhall receive no *other* Anſwer, but *Depart from me, I know you not. O good God*, how are we beſotted then, that rather than begin our Repentance *to-day*, we will wilfully run the Hazard of being eternally *miſerable* before *to-morrow Morning!* For if this ſhould be the *Evening* of our Day of Trial, as for all we know it may be, our *Life* and *Eternity* depend upon what we are now doing; and therefore one would think it ſhould highly concern us wiſely to manage this laſt Stake, the *winning* or *loſing* whereof may prove our *making* or *undoing*. In Pity therefore to our *periſhing* Souls let us return to our *Saviour*, before it be *too late*, before our *Feet ſtumble on the dark Mountains*, and we fall down into *everlaſting* Darkneſs. And being returned and reunited to him, let us have a care we do not revolt again; for if we draw back we cancel our Repentance, and forfeit all its *bleſſed* Fruits and Benefits; and unleſs we ſtedfaſtly perſevere

and

and hold out to the end, all the Pains we have taken in our Christian Course will be *for ever* lost, and the Remembrance of it will only administer to our *future* Misery. For how will it vex us in the *other* World to consider the Labour it cost us to take *Heaven* by Storm? How vigorously we strove to mount the *Scaling-Ladder*, through how many Difficulties we had forced our way to that height of Virtue and Religion we were arrived to, and then when we were got as it were to the *topmost* Rounds, and had laid our Hands upon the Battlements of *Heaven*, just ready to leap in and take Possession of all its Joys; how basely we let go our Hold, and so tumbled down from that *stupendous* Height into the *bottomless* Abyss of *endless* Misery? Doubtless this Consideration must necessarily sting our *woeful* Souls hereafter, and *for ever* enrage them against themselves. Wherefore, as we value the Safety of our *precious* Souls, let us, who by our *wilful* Rebellions have gone astray, return, and constantly adhere to our *blessed Saviour*. Alas! where can we be *happier* than in his Service, who imposeth nothing on us but what contributes to our Welfare? Where can we be *safer* than in his Arms, and under his Protection, who hath the Command and Disposal of all Events, and to whom all Power is given in *Heaven* and Earth? Where can we be placed more to *our own* Advantage than under his Guidance and Authority, who never permits any to serve him for nought, but hath engaged himself to recompense our Labour with a Crown of Glory that fades not away? And is it not *strange*, that

that after so many *advantageons* Invitations, we should need to be *scared* to our Duty? That after our *blessed Master* hath enjoined us such a *reasonable*, *gentle*, and infinitely *beneficial* Service, he should be forced to terrify us into it with the Flames of Hell?

IV. I proceed now to the *fourth* Proposition, *That when the Soul is lost, 'tis lost irrecoverably*; where the *Greek* Word ἀντάλλαγμα, which we render *Exchange*, is used in the same Sense with ἄντιλυτρον, which signifies a Price of Redemption, denoting that when once a Man hath sold his Soul to Perdition, it is *unredeemable*, and that no Price will be excepted for its Ransom and Deliverance; when a Man's Soul is in *Hell*, under the wretched Bondage of a *damned* Spirit, how *little* soever he regards it now, he would give all the World, if it were in his power, to be released again; but if he had a *thousand* Worlds it would not do, his Bondage being such as will admit no Ransom. For these Words of our *Saviour* seem to have been a *common Proverb* of the Age he lived in, and that derived from those Words of the Devil in *Job*, *All that a Man hath, will he give for his Life*; that is, when a Man is dying, he would willingly part with all to redeem his Life, but all will not do. Which *Proverb* our *Saviour* adapts to his *own* Argument, in which he proceeds from *temporal* to *eternal* Life: If a Man would give so much for his *temporal* Life, what would he not give for his *eternal* one? But as our *temporal* Life is not to be redeemed, so neither is our *eternal* one, when once it is lost; for when once our Soul is *lost* or *abandoned*

abandoned to the State of the Damned, it is *loſt for ever*, and there is no ἀντάλλαγμα, or Ranſom that will be accepted of by *God* for its Redemption thence. In the Proſecution of which Argument, I ſhall endeavour theſe two things.

1. To ſhew you that if *God* be ſo determined, he may, without any Injury either to his *Juſtice* or *Goodneſs*, detain *loſt* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and abſolutely refuſe to except any Ranſom for them.

2. That he is actually determined ſo to do.

1. That if God be ſo determined, he may, without any Injury either to his Juſtice or Goodneſs detain *loſt* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, without accepting any Ranſom for them. And this, I doubt not, will plainly appear, upon the *due* Conſideration of theſe *following* Propoſitions.

1*ſt*, That God being the *ſovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impoſe Laws upon all *other* Beings.

2*dly*, That having this Right, he may juſtly inforce thoſe Laws with whatſoever Penalties he ſees *neceſſary* or *convenient*.

3*dly*, That when thoſe Laws he impoſes are for the *Good* of his Subjects, it is not only *Juſtice* but *Goodneſs* in him, to inforce them with the *ſevereſt* Penalty.

4*thly*, That the Penalty of *eternal* Bondage under Miſery, is the *ſevereſt* and moſt *effectual* way to inforce thoſe *beneficial* Laws, and oblige us to the Obſervance of them.

5*thly*, That if *God* think *Good* to inforce his Laws with this Penalty, he hath as much Right to *exact* it when we diſobey, as he had to *threaten* and *impoſe* it.

6*thly*,

6thly, That his *actual* exacting of it can no more impeach his *Goodness*, than his *threatening* and *denouncing* it.

1. That God being the *sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impose Laws upon all *other* Beings. For he being the *greatest* and most *powerful* Being, can himself be *subject* to no *other* Law, but only that of his *own* Nature; and his *Power* being *infinite* and *unconfined*, as well as his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, and *Goodness*, doth sufficiently warrant him to do whatsoever is *consistent* with them. For to be sure a Being of infinite Power and Greatness, can have no Superior, but must be necessarily exalted above all *other* Authorities, by this *incommunicable* Prerogative of his Nature; and being raised above all Authorities, he must have Authority above all, and his *essential* Dominion having no *other* Law to bound it, but only that of his own Nature, he must necessarily have a Right to command whatsoever is *consistent* with his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, and *Goodness*. His *Will* therefore being, by the *infinite* Pre-eminence of his Power and Greatness *supreme*, all *other* Wills are obliged to bow before, and prostrate themselves to its *sovereign* Authority; and there is no Law whatsoever, but he may justly impose upon them, provided it be not *repugnant* to that *supreme* Law that is founded in his *own* Nature. This therefore being premised, that God hath a Right, as he is the *sovereign* Being, to give Laws to all other Beings; it hence follows,

2dly,

2*dly*, That he may juſtly enforce thoſe Laws with whatſoever Penalties he ſees *neceſſary* or *convenient*. For Laws without Penalties are rather Petitions than Commands; and unleſs they carry Force enough with them to *over-awe* the Subject, and make themſelves obeyed, they want the *formal* Sanction and Obligation of a Law. To have a Power therefore of impoſing Penalties muſt neceſſarily be *inſeparable* from the Power of making Laws, becauſe they are the Penalties that make the Laws to oblige, that give them Power to command, and enforce them with an *awful* Authority. And as the Power of giving Laws ſuppoſes the Power of impoſing Penalties, ſo it ſuppoſes a Power of impoſing ſuch Penalties as may be *ſufficient* to incline and awe the Subject into Obedience, againſt all Reaſons to the contrary. For unleſs the Penalty be *great* enough to *outweigh* all other Conſiderations, the Law which it enforces will be extremely *defective* in Point of Obligation, and leave the Subject as much Reaſon to diſobey as to obey. *God* therefore being by his own *natural* Right the *Supreme* Lawgiver of the World, muſt be ſuppoſed to have an *equal* Right of enforcing his Laws with ſuch Penalties, as in his own *infinite* Wiſdom he ſhall think *neceſſary* to oblige his Creatures to obey him; and there is no Penalty can be too *rigorous* or *ſevere*, which is *neceſſary* to enable his Laws to oblige and command us. Wherefore, according as he ſees his Subjects *more* or *leſs* tempted, or inclined to diſobey him, ſo will he need *greater* or *leſs* Penalties to oblige us to Obedience; and therefore foreſeeing what a *ſtrong*

Propensity of Evil there would be in our Nature, and with what *importunate* Temptations this would be excited and wrought upon, he could not but foresee that the *severest* Penalties would be necessary to back and enforce his Laws, and being *necessary* for that End he must needs have a Right to impose them, how *severe* soever they might be. Nor is this Severity less *good* than it is *just*; considering,

3*dly*, That when those Laws he imposes are for the *Good* of his Subjects, it is not only an Act of Justice in him to impose them with the *severest* Penalties, but of Goodness. And this is really the Case as to those Laws which *God* hath imposed upon us; for the Matter of them all is something tending to our Good, something or other that is *perfective* of our Natures, and conducive to our Happiness; and being so, the *greater* the Penalty is which they are back'd and enforced with, the *greater* Demonstation it is of God's Care and Zeal for our Happiness. For the End of Penalty is to oblige us to Obedience; and when all Obedience is for our *Good*, the more strictly he obliges us to it, the more he befriends us. When a *distracted* Man is endeavouring to mischief and destroy himself, it is Kindness to bind him, though it be with Chains of Iron. When therefore *God* found us so *prone* to injure ourselves by *wicked* and *mischievous* Actions, it was Mercy to bind our Hands with his Threatenings of Punishment; and the *stronger* his Bands are, the more they express his Kindness; because the more they oblige us to be *kind* to *ourselves*, and *true* to *our own* Interest. And certainly for *God* to lay

lay us under the *ſtrongeſt* Obligations to be *happy*, is ſo far from being a Blemiſh to his Goodneſs, that it is a moſt *glorious* Expreſſion of it; but if we will be ſo *obſtinate* as to run into the Mouth of thoſe Threatenings which he hath levelled againſt us to ſcare us into Happineſs, it is *juſt* with him to diſcharge them upon us, and make us feel the Effects of our Folly and Madneſs. Since therefore the Reaſon of the Penalty wherewith *God* hath enforced his Laws, is to oblige us to be *happy*; and ſince the *greater* it is, the more Force it muſt have to oblige us, it hence neceſſarily follows, that though it be not only a *great* but an *eternal* one, yet it is not at all *inconſiſtent* with his Goodneſs; eſpecially if we conſider,

4*thly*, That the Penalty of *eternal* Miſery, as it is the *ſevereſt*, ſo it is the moſt *effectual* to enforce thoſe *beneficial* Laws which *God* hath impoſed on us, and to oblige us to the Obſervance of them. For to deter us from Sin, who are ſo vehemently prone to it, it was very requiſite that the Penalty denounced againſt it, ſhould not only be *great* as to the Degree, but endleſs alſo as to the Duration of it; that ſo it might cut us *off* from all Pretence of Preſumption, and leave us no Ground of Encouragement to be *wicked*. For we are exceeding *apt* to ſlight and undervalue thoſe *Evils*, which are propoſed to deter us from the *Goods* which we vehemently deſire, eſpecially when theſe *Goods* are *preſent* and *ſenſible*, and thoſe *Evils future* and *inviſible*. For thus we conclude, the *Good* that is before us we may enjoy a great while; and, which is very conſiderable, we may pre-

sently enter upon the Possession of it; but as for the *Evil* that is *consequent* to it, it may be a long while before it befals us; and when it doth, there is this Comfort, that it will at *last* have an End; and therefore let what will follow, let us ever seize the *present Good*, and make the *best* use we can of it; and as for the *future Evil*, whenever it happens, the Prospect of its End, tho' it be never so *remote*, will enable us to bear it more chearfully. For *ten* Years *present* Pleasure vehemently desired, will far more effectually perswade us, than a *future* Misery of *double* the Duration; and therefore if the *future* Penalty denounced against our Sin were *finite* and *temporary*, it would not be *sufficient* to balance those *present* Pleasures with which we are continually importuned and sollicited; for the Penalty being proposed to deter us from Pleasures which we dearly love, we are upon that Account inclined to make as *light* of it as may be, and to flatter ourselves with the *softest* and *easiest* Representations of it; so that to be sure if there were any one *comfortable* Circumstance in it, our Thoughts would presently insist upon that, and urge it as a Reason why we should not be afraid of it. So that if the Penalty of our Sin had in it but the Circumstance of being *finite*, to be sure whenever it controlled our *vicious* Desires, we should still make this a Pretence to despise it; *Well, let it be never so terrible, it will have an End*, Wherefore to enable it to terrify us effectually, it was requisite that it should not only be *great*, but *endless*; that it being stripped of all *tolerable* Circumstances, we might be

be *able* to find nothing in it to qualify the Terror of it. But now it being not only *great* but *eternal*, the Threat of it, which, like a Cloud, hangs *lowering* over us, hath no *bright side* to divert our Thoughts from the Blackneſs and Horror of it; ſo that whenever we think of it, and weigh it in the Balance with our Sins, we muſt reſolve to forſake them, or chuſe to be *deſperate*. Since therefore an *eternal* Penalty was ſo neceſſary to enforce God's Law, and ſince his Law is for our *good*, it is *plain* that his ſo enforcing it can blemiſh neither his Juſtice nor Goodneſs. Wherefore though we ſhould ſmart *for ever* for our Diſobedience hereafter, we can have no *juſt* Reaſon to complain of *God*; eſpecially conſidering,

5*thly*, That if *God* ſhall think *good* to enforce his Law with ſuch an *eternal* Penalty, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have as much Right to exact it upon our Diſobedience, as he had to threaten and impoſe it. For as *Supremacy* over all *other* Beings gives a Right to make Laws, and enforce them with Threatenings of Puniſhment; ſo when he hath actually impoſed Laws upon us, our Diſobedience to them gives a Right to inflict on us the Puniſhments which he threatened when he impoſed them. For in all *legal* Puniſhments the Right of threatening them is founded on the Power of the *Sovereign*; but the Right of executing them in the Diſobedience of the *Subject*; and if the Penalty be ſuch, as that upon the Subjects Diſobedience the *Sovereign* cannot juſtly execute it, it was *unjuſt* for him to threaten it; for to threaten legally, is to claim a Right to puniſh upon

Condition the Law be broken and violated; and that *Sovereign*, who upon condition of the Subjects Diſobedience, claims a Right to *more* Puniſhment than he can juſtly exact on him when he diſobeys, pretends to *more* Right than he really hath, and ſo by conſequence his Claim is *unrighteous*. If therefore by the Threat of his Law *God* may juſtly claim a Right to puniſh us *for ever* if we diſobey, then doubtleſs when we have actually diſobeyed, he may as juſtly exact it, and doth no more exceed his Right when he inflicts what he threatened, than he did when he threatened to inflict it. If he had Right to ſay, *I will puniſh you for ever upon condition you tranſgreſs my Laws*, then upon our performing that Condition he muſt neceſſarily have Right to do as he ſaid. So that our tranſgreſſing his Law being a *ſufficient* Condition for him to found a *rightful* Claim to puniſh us *eternally*, by our doing this Condition we juſtly forfeit ourſelves to *eternal* Puniſhment, and by *our own* Act and Deed voluntarily reſign up our *precious* Souls to the *juſt* Laſh of an *everlaſting* Vengeance; which as the *Juſtice* of *God* is no way obliged to ſuſpend, ſo neither is his *Goodneſs*, which now is our only Reſerve; conſidering,

6*thly*, and *laſtly*, That God's exacting this *eternal* Penalty of us can no more impeach his *Goodneſs*, than his threatening and denouncing it. That it is highly *conſiſtent* with his Goodneſs to threaten it, I have already proved; but if it were not alſo *conſiſtent* therewith to inflict it, to be ſure his own Wiſdom would never admit him to threaten it. For to what End

ſhould

ſhould he threaten to act contrary to the *Goodneſs* of his Nature? Either he muſt deſign to make us believe that he intends to act, or not; if the *firſt*, he muſt thereby deſign to abuſe and miſrepreſent himſelf in the Opinion of his Creatures, to blemiſh the Reputation, and expoſe the Honour of his own *infinite* Goodneſs. But if he did not deſign to make us believe it, to what End ſhould he threaten it, ſince unleſs we believe it, it can no more affect us than the firing of a *Gun* that is charged with nothing but Powder, and was deſigned to make a Noiſe only, but to do no Execution? So that if it be *repugnant* to God's *Goodneſs* to execute this Penalty, it muſt be *repugnant* to his *Wiſdom* to denounce it; but it being not only *conſiſtent* with, but an Expreſſion of his *Goodneſs* to denounce it, when he deſigns thereby to oblige us more firmly to our Duty, in which our *everlaſting* Happineſs is included, it may be no *leſs* an Expreſſion of the ſame *Goodneſs* to execute it upon us, when we, by our *obſtinate* Perſiſtance in Sin, have rendered ourſelves *incapable* of Mercy. For now there being no more *Good* to be done upon us, it will be an Act of *Goodneſs* in *God* to puniſh us *for ever*, if thereby any *Good* may be done to *others* by us; if by making us *everlaſting* Monuments of his *juſt* Indignation, he can everlaſtingly warn and ſecure *others* from thoſe *deſperate* Courſes that ruined us. For in this Caſe, his puniſhing us *for ever* may be an *effectual* Means to do that *Good* to others which he intended to do to us by threatening to puniſh us *for ever*, and they may take warning by our Puniſhment, though

we would take none by his Threatening. And when by being obſtinately *deaf* to the Threat of *eternal* Perdition, which *God* denounced on purpoſe to oblige us to be *happy*, we have not only forfeited ourſelves to it, but have alſo *ſinned* ourſelves into an Incapacity of having any *good* done upon us; the only Uſe which the *Divine Goodneſs* can make of us for the *future*, is to do *good* to others by us; which it can no otherwiſe do, but by making our *everlaſting* Suffering an *everlaſting* Example for them to take warning by. For though there is no doubt but every *virtuous* Soul ſhall be hereafter ſo confirmed in its State of Beatitude, as that it ſhall never fall from it, yet ſhall it be confirmed no otherwiſe than by the Force of thoſe Reaſons and *invincible* Motives which ſhall then continually urge, and immovably determine it unto that which is good: One of which Reaſons, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, will be their Proſpect of the *endleſs* Miſeries of the *Damned*, which will be an *everlaſting* Monitor to them, and together with their *own* Senſe of the *raviſhing* Pleaſures of *Goodneſs*, will ſecure them *for ever* from falling. For if the *Angels* of *Heaven* took warning by the Fall and Ruin of their *Apoſtate Brethren*, as doubtleſs they did, and thereupon became more immovably confirmed in *Innocence* and *Goodneſs*; why may we not as well ſuppoſe, that one of thoſe Reaſons by which the *Spirits of juſt Men* are ſo immovably confirmed in their *heavenly State*, is the *ſad* Example of the *endleſs* Miſeries of the Wicked? If therefore when *God* hath denounced *eternal* Miſery againſt

againſt us on purpoſe to threaten us into Happineſs, we will take no warning, it is an Act of *Goodneſs* in him to inflict it upon us, ſince thereby he may ſo effectually contribute to the confirming of *others* in *eternal* Happineſs. For if we will not be wrought on by ſuch a *dreadful* Denunciation, there is no good to be done upon us; and when we are paſt Recovery, and are forfeited by *our own* Obſtinacy into the Hands of God's Vengeance, it will be an Act of Goodneſs in him ſo to diſpoſe of us as may be moſt for the *Good* of others, and conſequently to diſpoſe of us to *eternal* Miſery, and by ſo doing to make uſe of us as Arguments to confirm and eſtabliſh *others* in *eternal* Happineſs; that ſo our Sufferings may be to them what his Threatenings were to us, Arguments to oblige us to be *happy for ever*. And ſo I have done with the *firſt* Thing propoſed; which was to ſhew you that if *God* be ſo determined, he may, without any Injury either to his *Juſtice* or *Goodneſs*, retain *loſt* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and abſolutely refuſe to accept any Ranſom for them.

I now proceed to the *ſecond* Head of Diſcourſe, namely, to prove that *God* is actually determined ſo to do. And this I ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate by theſe *three* Reaſons.

1. Becauſe he hath already exacted a Ranſom for the Souls of Men, to which no *other* can be *equivalent*; from whence we may reaſonably infer, that if this be rejected he will accept no *other*.

2. Becauſe he hath expreſly declared *himſelf* to be thus determined.

3. Becauſe

3. Because having thus declared himself, we must suppose that either he intended this Declaration only, for a *Scarecrow*, or that he is determined to act accordingly.

1*st*; That *God* is determined to conclude lost Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears from hence; because he hath already exacted a Ransom for them, to which no *other* can be *equivalent*; from whence we may reasonably infer, that if *this* be rejected, he will accept no *other*. When by our *first* Apostacy from *God*, we strained the Innocence of our Natures, and forfeited our Lives to the *just* Vengeance of *Heaven*; so terribly was it then incensed against us, that it would accept no *meaner* Ransom for us than the *precious* Blood of the *Son of God*; for so St. *Peter* tells us, *That we were not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And though this Ransom was of such a *vast* and *incomparable* Value, that all the Treasures in *Heaven* and Earth are *insignificant* Trifles to it; yet was the Virtue of it to extend no further than to those, who, by a *lively* Faith, and *unfeigned* Repentance, returned from their Rebellion to their Duty and Allegiance; which if we do not, but instead thereof obstinately persist in our Wickedness and Folly, we renounce all our Part and Interest in the Blood of our *Saviour*; and do in effect declare, that upon such Terms as those we will not be beholden to him for our Ransom; but that rather than accept of Redemption upon such *ungrateful*

grateful Conditions, we will truſt to the Courteſy of the Vengeance of *God*, and abide the moſt *fatal* Effects of it. When therefore by perſiſting to the End in our Unbelief and Impenitence, we have finally rejected the Blood of *Chriſt*, and utterly extinguiſhed all our Right and Title to it; what Pretence of Reaſon have we to hope, that *God* will ever accept of any *other* Ranſom for us? When to the Sins, by which we made the *firſt* Forfeiture of our Souls, we have added the *rank* and *horrid* Impiety of trampling on the Blood of the Son of *God*, and ſo are not only not redeemed by it from the Vengeance to come, but are a *thouſand* times more deeply enthralled to it, by reaſon that *additional* Guilt we have contracted by ſquandering away the Price of our Redemption; with what Face can we expect, in the midſt of ſuch *black* Circumſtances, that *God* ſhould accept of any Exchange for our Souls? He that would not releaſe us from the Obligation of our *firſt* Guilts upon any *leſs* Conſideration than the Blood of his Son, what *Likelihood* is there that any Conſideration ſhould move him to releaſe us after we have ſo prodigiouſly augmented our Guilt by rejecting his Blood, and finally renouncing all our Intereſt in it? Doubtleſs, he that demanded ſo *vaſt* a Ranſom for us when our Guilt was ſo comparatively *ſmall* and *inconſiderable*, will account no Ranſom *ſufficient* when we have ſo tranſcendently inhanced and multiplied it. For if the Blood of *Chriſt*, which is of ſuch an *unſpeakable* Value, can give us no Relief without our *willing* Acceptance of it upon the Terms it is propoſed to us, then when

when we have finally refused it on those Terms, it must be something that is more *valuable* than his Blood that must relieve us; something that is *sufficient* not only to redeem us from those Guilts which his Blood was a Ransom for, but also to expiate the Guilt of our trampling on his Blood, which is the *greatest* and *blackest* of all. But since the Blood of *Christ* is incomparably the most *precious* Ransom that *Heaven* and Earth could afford, what hope is there, that when *this* is rejected by us, *God* should accept any *other* in exchange for our Souls?

2*dly*, That *God* is really determined to conclude *lost* Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears also from hence, because he hath expressly declared himself to be so determined. For so our *blessed Saviour*, who was the *great* Messenger of his Will to the World, hath expressly told us, that the *final* Sentence of the Wicked shall be to *everlasting Fire*, *Mat.* xxv. 41. and that the Fate of *obstinate* Sinners, whom he compares to Chaff, shall be to be *burned up with unquenchable Fire*. But perhaps you may object, that these Texts only prove the *Everlastingness* of the Fire in which they shall suffer, and not their *everlasting* Suffering in it; for this Fire perhaps may immediately consume, and utterly destroy them, and render them *insensible* of Misery *for ever*. To which I answer, That the contrary is most evident; for they are expressly said to live in this Fire, and to perform the Functions of *living* Beings in Misery; *to weep and wail, and gnash their Teeth*, Mat. xiii. 42. and in the Parable

Parable of *Dives*, he is said to *lift up his Eyes in Hell, being in Torments*, and to *see* Abraham *afar off, and* Lazarus *in his Bosom*; and to *cry out to* Abraham, *Father* Abraham, *have Mercy on me, and send* Lazarus, *that he may dip the Top of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue, for I am tormented in this Flame*, Luke xvi. 23.———A *plain* Evidence that this Fire is to torment and not to consume them. Well, but this you will say imports no more than their being tortnred in *Hell* for some Period of Time, after which, it may be, they may cease to be, and consequently to be *miserable*. To which I answer, That elsewhere it is expressly asserted, that this Torture is to endure *for ever*; for *these*, saith our *Saviour*, speaking of the Wicked, *shall go away into everlasting Punishment*, Mat. xxv. 46. And how can their Punishment be *everlasting*, unless we suppose them to subsist everlastingly in it? If you say it is *everlasting*, only as is an *everlasting* Destruction, or Privation of their Being: I answer, That in other Places of *Scripture* it is expressly asserted, that this *everlasting* Punishment is a *positive* Thing; for it is said to be a *Worm* that never *dieth*, *Mark* ix. 44. that is, that to all *Eternity* lives and preys upon the *wretched* Sufferers; and more expressly yet, *Rev.* xx. 10. those that are *cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone*, are said to *be tormented* there *Day and Night for ever and ever*: Where the *Greek* Word βασανισθήσονται doth plainly denote *positive* Torment, and referring peculiarly to a Rack, denotes the kind of this *positive* Torment to be such as is not designed to put an end to our Lives,

Lives, but to continue them with *inexpreſſible* Pains. For this we know is the *proper* Uſe and Deſign of a Rack; and accordingly upon this *tormenting* Rack of *helliſh* Puniſhment they are ſaid to have *no Reſt Day nor Night*, *Rev.* xiv. 11. So that the *eternal* Miſery of *loſt* Souls is as fully and expreſly aſſerted in *Scripture*, as it could well have been, had it been expreſſed with a Deſign to leave no Pretence of Exception for Gainſayers; and when a Thing is as plainly aſſerted to *be* as it could well have been if it really were, either we muſt ſuppoſe the Thing to *be*, or elſe the Aſſertion to be *fallacious*. So that if we think that God's *own* Word doth truly ſignify his Determination, we muſt from hence be forced to conclude, that he is really determined to ſhut up *loſt* Souls in *eternal* Miſery, and admit no Ranſom for them.

3*dly*, and *laſtly*, This alſo appears, becauſe if after he hath thus declared himſelf, there were any Reaſon to think that he is not determined to act accordingly, that Reaſon would warrant us to believe that this Declaration was only intended for a *Scarecrow*, and conſequently to contemn and deſpiſe it. For againſt all that hath been ſaid, it may be (and is by ſome Men) objected, That *God* is not bound to do as he threatens; that when by our Diſobedience we have incurred the Penalty he threatens, he hath an *undoubted* Right indeed to inflict it upon us, and conſequently may, if he pleaſe, inflict it without any Wrong or Injuſtice; but then, if he pleaſe, he may diſpenſe with it *too*, either in the *whole*, or in part, as he ſees convenient. For the Puniſhment being only a Debt which the

the Sinner owes to him, he is no more obliged than *other* Creditors are to exact the *utmoſt* Farthing of it; but may exact or remit the *whole*, or abate what Part ſoever he pleaſes; and therefore it is to be hoped, that he being a *merciful* Creditor, will not be ſo *extreme* and *rigorous* as to exact of us the *utmoſt* Puniſhment we owe him; but that when he hath made us *ſmart* a while for our Folly, he will either releaſe us into a more *happy* Condition, or put an End to our Beings and Miſeries together. To which I might anſwer, That when by our Sins we have forfeited ourſelves to the *juſt* Vengeance of *God*, it is *infinite* Mercy and Goodneſs to others, to puniſh us according to his Threatening; and therefore when we by our Sins have rendered ourſelves *incapable* of his Mercy, that Mercy which now inclines him to do *Good* to *us*, will then equally incline him to do *Good* to *others*, by the *dreadful* Example of our Puniſhment; and ſo he may be a very *merciful* Creditor, and notwithſtanding exact of us the *utmoſt* Farthing. But this I have already largely inſiſted on, and therefore, 2*dly*, I anſwer, That what God may do is not for us to determine, when he may, or may not, and is obliged to neither; but when he hath expreſly denounced what he will do, we can have no Reaſon to hope that he will be *better* than his Word. For if after that he hath denounced, that if we perſiſt in our Sin he will puniſh us *for ever* for it, he ſhould have left us any *juſt* Reaſon to hope that he will not, he would thereby have countermined himſelf, and baffled the Deſign of his *own* Denunciation, which is

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to terrify his *rebellious* Creatures from their Sins, and to awe them into Obedience to his Laws. But how much Reason soever he hath given me to hope, that he will not be so *severe* to me as he threatens, so much Reason he must have given me not to be afraid of his Threatenings. If I had any *just* Reason to believe that he will be more *merciful* than to inflict what he denounces, it is an *irrational* Thing for me to dread his Denunciations; for I know *God* will do as *just* Reason directs, and therefore I must conclude either my Reason to be *false*, or God's Denunciation to be a *Scarecrow*; for if there be any *just* Reason why his Mercy and Goodness should interpose, and avert the Execution of his Threats from me, I ought not to be afraid of them, because I am sure he can do nothing that his Mercy and Goodness forbids: But if there be no Reason for such an Interposure, I am unreasonably *presumptuous* to expect it. So that either my Expectation must be *groundless*, or my Fear of God's Threatenings *irrational*: And can it be imagined that the *wise* God would ever go about to awe his Creatures into Obedience, by threatening their Sin with such Punishments as he knows they have *just* Reason not to be afraid of? Whatsoever therefore *God* may do, I am sure if we go on in our Sins, we can have no Reason to hope that he will either not punish us at all, or *less* than he hath threatened; or consequently, that he will abate us *one* Moment of that *eternal* Misery which he hath so plainly and expressly denounced against us. What then remains, but that since when our Soul is *lost*, it is *lost for ever*,

ever, we now take all *poſſible* Care to ſecure it while we may.

V. I proceed now to the *fifth* and *laſt* Propoſition; *That this irrecoverable Loſs of the Soul is of ſuch VAST and UNSPEAKABLE Moment, that the Gain of all the World is not ſufficient to compenſate it: What ſhall it profit a Man, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* That is, It will not profit him at all; nay, it will be ſo far from *that*, that it will turn to his *unſpeakable* Loſs and Diſadvantage: Though by renouncing his Profeſſion of my Doctrine, or his Obedience of my Laws, a Man were ſure to make himſelf Lord of all the World, and to poſſeſs and enjoy it as long as he lived; yet if for ſo doing he ſhould afterwards loſe his Soul, as moſt certainly he will, he will find in the Iſſue that he hath made a *woeful* Bargain of it, and be forced to acknowledge himſelf a *vaſt* Loſer, when he comes to ſuffer thoſe *intolerable* Damages which the Loſs of a Soul implies. For the Proof of which, I ſhall run a Compariſon between the *Gain* and the *Loſs*, and therein endeavour to repreſent to you how much the Evil of *this* Loſs exceeds the Good of *that* Gain; and this I ſhall do in theſe *following* Particulars:

1*ſt*, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantaſtical*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is *real* and *ſubſtantial*.

2*dly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *narrow* and *particular*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is *large* and *univerſal*.

3*dly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is never to be improved into *Good*.

4*thly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *mixed* and *sophisticated*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *pure* and *unmingled*.

5*thly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *full* of Intermissions; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *continual*.

6*thly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *short* and *transitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *eternal*.

1*st*, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantastical*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *real* and *substantial*. For whatsoever we gain of this World's *Goods* beyond what is *necessary* to serve the *real* Occasions, and *modest* Conveniencies of this *present* Life, administers to no *other* Purpose, but only to gratify an *extravagant* Fancy; For all the *real* Need that a Man hath of these *worldly Goods*, is only to maintain and provide for his Body; for his Soul hath no more need of them, than an Angel hath of Money to buy Victuals and Clothes with: And one would think so *small* a Thing as an *human* Body is, could not need *many* Things; and that a Piece of *animate* Matter, some six Feet long, might be very *easily* and *cheaply* provided for: And indeed so it would be, if we could once forbear fancying its Needs to be *greater* than they are; but if we let loose the Reins to an *ungoverned* Fancy, that will so extend its Needs beyond the Capacities of its Nature, that all the World will be *too* little to content the *extravagant* Appetites

petites of this *little* Clod of Earth. Lay but your Fancies aſide, and you will want no *other* Apparel but what is *ſufficient* to keep you *warm*, and *clean*, and *modeſt*, and with this you may be very cheaply provided; but if you will reſolve to humour that *capricious* Thing, you will want the Revenue of a *Lordſhip* to cover your Nakedneſs. Keep but your Fancies in order, and your Appetites will be contented with *plain* and *wholeſome* Proviſions, and this a *ſmall* Income will furniſh you with; but if once you let looſe that *roving* Faculty, and ſuffer it to grow *wanton* and *delicate*, that will ſo ſtretch your Appetites, that the Stores of all the *four Elements* will ſcarce be *ſufficient* to gratify their Luxuries. And ſo it is in all *other* Things appertaining to the Body; whoſe Wants, according to Nature's Meaſures, are *ſmall*, but according to Fancy's are *infinite*. So that if a Man had all the World in his Poſſeſſion, yet all but that *little little* Part of it that is either naturally *neceſſary*, or rationally *convenient* for his *bodily* Subſiſtence, would be *good* for nothing but to humour the Deſires of an *extravagant* Fancy, which are ſo far from being quenched, that they are but the more inflamed by Enjoyment. If I had all the Wealth of *Cræſus*, the *good* Fortunes of *Cæſar*, and the Dominions of *Alexander*, what would it advantage me? I ſhould only have abundance of Things, that I have no *real* need of; Things, that if I would myſelf, I might eaſily be as *happy* without, as I can be with them. For would I but make my Nature and my Reaſon the Meaſure of my Wants, I might always live next Door to

Satisfaction; and as for my Wants, they would be ſo *light* and *portable*, that I might eaſily take them, and carry them along with me, and lay them down almoſt whereſoever I pleaſed. Whereas if I permit my Fancy to grow *wild* and *imaginative*, I ſhall always find my Wants doubled with my Enjoyments; and whereas when I had but *five Pounds*, I needed but *five hundred*; when I have *five hundred*, I ſhall need *five thouſand*; and ſo on, till at laſt I need beyond all poſſibility of Satisfaction. Since therefore all that this World can do for me, beſides the ſupplying of a *few modeſt* Needs, which a very *little* of it will do, what a *miſerable* Loſer ſhall I be, if merely to gratify my Fancy, I forfeit my Soul, and incur the *real* Miſeries of a *woeful* Eternity in purſuit of the *fantaſtick* Joys of a Moment? If to purchaſe things which I ſhall never be the better for, which while I have not, I do not need, and which when I have I ſhall not enjoy, I ſhould not only ſquander away the moſt *ſubſtantial* Happineſs, but plunge myſelf into a *vaſt* Abyſs of *real* and *intolerable* Miſeries; *O good God*, what a *woeful* Bargain ſhall I have of it? For though the Pleaſure of our Sin doth always vaniſh on the Brink of Fruition, and like a *golden* Dream, concludes in a *diſappointed* Expectation; yet the Sting that is to follow it will produce in us not only a *real*, but an extremely *ſharp* and *dolorous* Perception; ſo extremely *ſharp*, that it will pierce our very Hearts, and cauſe us to roar out with Anguiſh for ever. And, alas! what a *poor* Compenſation is it for a Man that muſt e'er long be enduring the Tor-

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tures of a *tedious* Famine, to be entertained a *few* Moments with the Picture of a Feaſt, or the Story of *Cleopatra*'s Banquet? Or what Man in his Wits would ever forfeit himſelf, for the *mere* Fancy of a Pleaſure, to the *lingering* Torments of a Rack? And yet, *O wretched* Sinner, thou acteſt a *thouſand* times more extravagantly; who, by thy *unlawful* Purſuits of the *imaginary* Pleaſures of the World, betrayeſt thy Soul to the *bitter* Torments of *Hell.*

2*dly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *narrow* and *particular*, but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of a Soul is *large* and *univerſal.* 'Tis but a Part of ourſelves, and that the *worſt* Part *too*, that this World's *Goods* can benefit and advantage; they can only clothe our Bodies more ſplendidly, and feed them more deliciouſly, and furniſh them with more Plenty of *outward* Accommodations; but, alas! for the Soul, they are as *inſignificant* to her, as *muſical* Sounds are to the Eye of the Body, or *magnificent* Shew to the Ear: They cannot improve the *meaneſt* Faculty about her, nor make her in any reſpect either the *better* or the *wiſer.* And as for the Body itſelf, wherein all their Lines do centre, there are a *thouſand* Caſes in which they are perfectly *uſeleſs*; for they cannot give *Health* to it in any *Sickneſs*, nor *Eaſe* in any *Pain*; they cannot recover a *loſt* Senſe, nor reſtore a *withered* Limb, nor rectify a *deformed* Feature; nor is it in their power to reprieve it from the Grave one Moment beyond the *natural* Period of its Mortality. So extremely *narrow* are theſe *worldly* Goods which

we are ſo greedy of, that they can extend their Benefits no farther than the Body; nay, and even to *that* they are vaſtly *inadequate*, there being a *thouſand bodily* Neceſſities whereunto they cannot extend themſelves. So that if to purchaſe theſe we expoſe ourſelves to *eternal* Perdition, we ſhall have in compariſon but a *Drop* of *Good* to compenſate ourſelves for an *Ocean* of *Miſery*. For the Miſery of *Hell* is as *vaſt* and *extenſive* as our Capacity of Suffering, and hath in it an *appropriate* Torment for every *ſenſible* Part of our Natures. It racks the *wretched* Soul in every Faculty, and fills *up* all its Capacities of Miſery with Anguiſh and Vexation: It afflicts its Mind with *horrid* Apprehenſions, wounds and gnaſhes its Conſcience with *diſmal* Reflections; it feſters its Will with *black* and *venemous* Paſſions, and ſtarves its Deſires with *everlaſting* Famine. And as it leaves no Part of the Soul untormented, but covers it over from Head to Foot with Wounds and Bruiſes, and *putrifying* Sores; ſo when the Body at the Reſurrection is reunited to it, the Miſery of Hell will extend to this alſo; for then it will have ſuperadded to its *ſpiritual* Plagues, the moſt *exquiſite* Inſtrument of *corporeal* Torment, *viz.* the *dark*, and *noiſom*, and *ſcorching* Flames of a *burning* World, which will ſeize upon the Bodies of *reprobate Sinners*, they being finally abandoned to them by the *laſt* and *final* Sentence, and ſtick cloſe to, and burn through them *for ever*. And their Bodies being thus wrapped and clothed in *flaming* Sulphur, muſt needs be exquiſitely vexed in every Part and Member, and feel as many Torments

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as they have Senſes to endure them. Thus the Miſeries of *Hell*, you ſee, are far more *extenſive* than the *Goods* of this World; for whereas *theſe* extend only to our Bodies, and can relieve them but in a *few* of their Neceſſities, *thoſe* overſpread both the Body and Soul, and are both *coeternal* and *coequal* with their *utmoſt* Capacities of Suffering: So that when by our *unlawful* Purſuits of the *Goods* of this World we forfeit ourſelves to *eternal* Perdition, we plunge our *whole* Nature into *intolerable* Miſery, for the Eaſe and the Pleaſure of one *particular* Part. Now, would any Man in his Wits, do you think, eat *Ratsbane* for no *other* Reaſon, but only becauſe it is *ſweet?* Would he, to pleaſe his *liquoriſh* Palate, diffuſe a *tormenting* Poiſon over all his Parts and Members? Or would he think the Pleaſure of one *ſweet* Guſt, a *ſufficient* Compenſation for all the *ſucceeding* Spaſms and Convulſions? Surely, no; none but a Madman could ever admit of ſuch an Extravagance. And yet, *O wretched* Sinner! thou art far more *wild* and *extravagant*; for a *particular Good* thou throweſt thyſelf headlong into an *univerſal* Miſery; and to gratify thy Body in a *few little* Things, doſt utterly ruin both thy Body and Soul. To pleaſe thyſelf in *one* Part, thou puniſheſt thyſelf in *all*; and for the gratifying *one* Senſe, deriveſt a *tormenting* Venom over all the Senſes of thy Nature; and ſo, *in fine*, wilt have nothing but the Pleaſure of a Taſte or a Touch, to compenſate thee for all the Agonies and Torments that thy Body and Soul together are *able* to ſuſtain. And what a *poor* Compenſation this is, I leave you to judge.

3*dly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is never to be improved into *Good*. When we are arrived to the Possession of those *outward* Goods which at present we do so greedily grasp after, it is a very *uncertain* thing whether they will *prove* Goods to us, or no; whether, even as to this Life, we shall be the *better*, or the *worse* for them. For it is very often seen that these *worldly* Goods prove the *worst* of Plagues to those that are the Owners of them, and that those things which we account the Blessings of this Life, do prove the Curses and Miseries of it. When by a *thousand Lyes*, *Flatteries* and *Circumventions*, a Man hath raised himself *up* to that Pinacle of Preferment which his Ambition aspired to, how often hath that Height proved the Occasion of his Fall, by exposing him to those Storms of Envy and Misfortune which would have blown over his Head, had he sat quietly *below*, and been contented to enjoy himself in a more *private* Fortune? And so, when by an *infinite* Number of *Rapines* and *Oppressions*, *Frauds* and *dishonest Compliances*, a Man hath amassed together a *vast* deal of Wealth, how often hath *that* proved the Occasion of his Undoing? Sometimes by exposing him to the *rapacious* Covetousness of *others*, but most commonly to the *ill* Effects of his own *extravagant* Luxuries. For usually when Fraud is the *Procurer* of Wealth, Wealth is the *Bawd* of Luxury; this being the *best* Expedient to drown the Cry of the Guilt of our Dishonesty. And then by that time Luxury hath

hath produced its *natural* Effects, it commonly leaves the *wealthy* Poſſeſſor in a far *worſe* Condition than Poverty; it leaves him ſo racked with the *Gout* or the *Stone*, ſo overwhelmed with *Catarrhs* or *Dropſies*, that the *miſerable* Man would be heartily contented to part with all his Wealth for Eaſe, and to return to Poverty, ſo he might but return to the Health of an *honeſt* Ploughman; whereas, would he have contented himſelf with the *honeſt* Acqueſt of a *moderate* Fortune, he need have wanted nothing but Temptations to Luxury, and Proviſions for *tormenting* Diſeaſes. So that in ſhort, whilſt we are purſuing this World's Goods, we know not what our Game will be till we have ſeized on it; peradventure, inſtead of *Veniſon* we are hunting a Serpent, which, when we have caught, will ſting and invenom us, and prove a Plague inſtead of a Satisfaction. And is it not *extravagant* Madneſs then for Men to run themſelves into all thoſe Miſeries, which *everlaſting* Ruin and Perdition implies, for the ſake of ſuch *uncertain* Goods, which when they are poſſeſſed of, for all they know, may do them a *thouſand* times more Miſchief than Good? For as for thoſe *future* Miſeries, which by our *ſinful* Purſuits of theſe *preſent* Goods we incur, they are all ſuch *abſolute* and *eſſential* Evils, that there is not one Drop of Good to be extracted out of them; for as they are *eternal*, they are of an *unalterable* Nature, and the ſame *inſupportable* Plagues they were yeſterday, they will continue to be to-day, and *for ever*. Indeed if we were to outlive them, they might be accidentally *advantageous*

tageous to us; they might discipline our Natures for an Happiness to come, and serve as so many Toils to our *future* Pleasures; and when they are past, the Remembrance of them, like *bitter* Sauce, might give a Relish to our Joys, and render them more *grateful* and *delicious*: But we being to endure them for ever, there is nothing good can succeed them, no *possible* Advantage can be derived from them; for in Miseries that have no End, there can be nothing but Misery. And is it not very strange then, that Men should forfeit their Souls to such *unalterable* Miseries, for such Goods as may be Plagues to them? when, for all they know, there may be such a Train of Mischiefs at the Heels of these *Pleasures*, and *Profits*, and *Honours*, they are so greedy of, as may outweigh all the Good of them, and render them a *dear* Pennyworth, though they had never pawned their Souls for them? And if it so prove, as it is very *probable* it may, then their Bargain is *worse* than if they had pawned their Souls for nothing; because they have incurred *one* Misery only to seize upon *another*, and have waded through a *temporal* to come at an *eternal* one.

4*thly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World, is *mixed* and *sophisticated*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *pure* and *unmingled*. Should a Man sell his Soul for never so *great* a Share of this World's Goods, he would find he had gotten but a very *uneasy* Purchase; a Purchase as he can neither secure, without a *great* deal of Care, nor yet enjoy without a great deal of Dissatisfaction. For what

what we call ours, is really ours but for our Portion of Expence and Uſe; and all that is ours beyond this, is only the Title and the Care, and the Trouble of ſecuring and diſpenſing it; for let but your Servants walk into your *Gardens* of *Pleaſure*, and the Air ſhall fan them with as *gentle* Gales, the Flowers delight them with as *fragrant* Odours, and the Birds entertain them with as *raviſhing* Melodies. And, in ſome Senſe, your *meaneſt* Servants enjoy what you have with *far* more Freedom than you; for your Poſſeſſions are like a *great* Harveſt, which many Labourers muſt bring in, and more muſt eat of; only you are the Centre of all the Care, and you they fix on; but the Profits run out to all the Lines of your Circle, who uſually enjoy their *ſeveral* Shares with much more Peace and Quiet than you. You take the Pains to dig the Well, and undergo the Care of ſupplying and maintaining it; and when you have done, you can drink no more of it than the *meaneſt* Slave about you; but what you drink can't be ſo *ſweet* and *pure*, becauſe it is daſhed with many more Cares and Diſturbances. For conſidering the *infinite* Hazards theſe *worldly* Goods are expoſed to, they muſt needs carry with them abundance of Care and Diſquietudes; ſo that when you are poſſeſſed of them, you only graſp a Bundle of *gilded* Thorns, which, while they *pleaſe* your Eyes, will *prick* your Hearts, and continually diſeaſe you in the Enjoyment of them. And then for the Enjoyment itſelf, conſidered abſtractedly from thoſe Cares that ſurround it, alas! it is ſuch as rather creates Deſire than Satisfaction; for though

though at a diſtance theſe *Terreſtrial* Goods do promiſe us *fair*, and raiſe in us *vaſt* and *boundleſs* Hopes, yet ſtill when we approach nearer to them, we find ourſelves miſerably deceived. And then our Enjoyment falling ſo vaſtly *ſhort* of our Expectation, all thoſe *ſwelling* Hopes that flattered and tolled us on, fall flat immediately under the Diſappointments of Fruition; and accordingly our Deſires miſſing their *promiſed* Satisfaction, grow more *outragious* and *violent*. And thus our Enjoyments, as they are compaſſed with Vexations, ſo are they mingled with *reſtleſs* Diſcontents, as being all *too little* for our *vaſt* Deſires; which are therefore rather enraged than ſatisfied with them. What *infinite* Loſers therefore muſt thoſe Men be, who to compaſs thoſe *ſophiſticated* Goods which have ſo many Evils intermixed with them, forfeit their Souls to *everlaſting* Perdition; which is ſo *vaſt* and ſo *intenſe* an *Evil*, as will admit no degree of *Good* to be intermingled with it; a Miſery ſo *pure* and *unallayed*, as that it totally excludes all Communication with Happineſs, and will not admit the *leaſt* Hope of Eaſe or Refreſhment. For what Eaſe can we hope for in the *everlaſting* Burnings? What Refreſhment can we expect in the *unquenchable* Lake of Fire and Brimſtone? Doubtleſs we may as ſoon hope to find a Cordial in the Sting of a Scorpion, or *ſprightly Nectar* in the Neſt of Waſps, as one Degree of Eaſe or Comfort in *Hell*. There is not a Gleam of *Light* in all that Region of *Darkneſs*, not a Drop of *Sweet* in all that *vaſt* Ocean of *Gall* and *Wormwood*; but it is all Miſery, *ſharp* and *exquiſite*

exquiſite Miſery, without the *leaſt* Mixture of Eaſe, or Hope of Mitigation. Can we then be ſo *ſtupid* as to imagine the enjoying this World's *Goods*, which are all ſuch Compoſitions of *Good* and *Evil*, worth the enduring ſuch *pure* and *abſtracted* Miſeries for ever? Would you for the Pleaſure of an *intemperate* Draught that will quickly end in a Qualm or an Head-ach, be contented to endure the Torment of being *impaled?* Or provided you might ſpend this Night in your *laſcivious* Enjoyment, which after a *few* Moments will conclude in Shame and Remorſe, would you be willing to roar upon the Rack all the Night after? Doubtleſs you would not. And yet, God knows, theſe *Pleaſures* are not comparably ſo *diſproportionate* to thoſe *Pains*, as the Pleaſures of this World are to the Pains of *Eternity*. How then is it *poſſible* that ſuch *bitter Sweets* as theſe are, *Sweets* that are chequered with ſo many Cares, and allayed with ſo many Diſcontents, and Diſappointments, ſhould be *ſufficient* to countervail thoſe *intolerable* Miſeries which the Loſs of our Souls implies?

5*thly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *full* of Intermiſſions; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of a Soul is *continual*. If I were Lord of all the World, I ſhould never be able to live in a *conſtant* Enjoyment of it. For ſuch *wretched* Counterfeits are all the Pleaſures of Senſe, that they will not endure the Teſt of a *long* Fruition; for at the beſt they are but Frolicks of Delight, that never *ſeize* us but when we are turned *up* to them in *Moods* and *Fits*, and all the Complacencies we have in them

them are nothing but the *little* Starts of our Appetite, which, as ſoon as it hath done craving, grows *a weary* of them, and ſo enjoys and loaths them by Turns; for they can dwell no longer upon the Appetite than while the Neceſſities of Nature do continue; and every *freſh* Morſel after the Hunger is ſatisfied, is but a *new* Labour to a *tired* Digeſtion, and ſo inſtead of being a Pleaſure becomes an Oppreſſion. So that it is but a very *little* while that the Pleaſure of any *outward* Enjoyment continues; for till it hath pleaſed us it is not a Pleaſure, and when it hath, it ceaſes to be ſo; and ſo it dies as ſoon as it is born, and its Nativity is only a *Prelude* to its Funeral. Thus all our Enjoyments are ſtinted by our Appetites, which are naturally *incapable* of a *continued* Fruition. But then beſides this, our Enjoyments are *liable* to a thouſand *other* Interruptions, which are not in our power to prevent or avoid, for whether we will or no, we muſt be ſometimes out of Humour, and then all the Pleaſures in the World are moſt *tedious* Impertinencies; and ſometimes we muſt *ſleep*, and then we are *inſenſible* of them; and ſometimes be *ſick*, and then they are as *taſteleſs* as a Cork; and ſometimes be *griped* with *guilty* Thoughts, and *ill-boding* Reflections, and then, inſtead of Pleaſures, they are our Horrors and Vexations. Thus our Enjoyment, like an Ague, is *full* of Intermiſſions; now we are *pleaſed*, and anon we are *diſpleaſed*, and immediately after the *hot Fit* is over, the *cold one* returns; and thus it would be if we had all the World in our Poſſeſſion. And indeed the Intervals of our Enjoyment

Enjoyment of these *Terrestrial* Goods are usually *longer* than the Enjoyment itself, and the *hot Fits* of our Pleasure and Fruition are generally sooner over, than those *cold ones* of Displeasure and Dissatisfaction that succeed them. So that if I could command all the Goods in the World, they would be so far from yielding me a *continued* Happiness, that, in all Probability, the Interruptions of my Happiness would take up a *greater* part of my Life than the Enjoyment of it; and perhaps for every *one* Moment of Fruition, I should spend *two* either in Pain, or in Non-perception of Pleasure. How then is it *possible* that such a *broken* and *discontinued* Happiness as this should ever make us amends for those Miseries that are included in the Loss of our Souls? For to lose our Souls is to be *miserable* without any Interruption, to be eternally grieved and tortured without any Intervals of Ease or Refreshment. For the State of Perdition is a *continual* Torment spun out into an *endless* Duration, wherein there are no *Days* of *Rest*, nor *Nights* of *Sleep*, nor *intermediate* Pauses of Ease; where the Fire never ceases burning, nor the Worm gnawing, but *Woe* succeeds *Woe* without Intermission, and Miseries, like the *nimble* Minutes of Time, follow Miseries, and tread close upon *one another's* Heels. Hence, *Rev.* xx. 10. those that are cast into the Lake of Perdition, are said to be *tormented Day and Night for ever*; which plainly implies that their Miseries are all but one *uninterrupted* Torment, or *continual* Succession of *dolorous* Perceptions *for ever*. And if so, *O blessed God*, what a *poor* Compensation for it are the *broken* Joys of this World? For if the Misery of *Hell*

were

were to laſt no longer than the Happineſs of this World, yet if for *one* Week's Happineſs here I were to endure *another* Week's Miſery *there*, I ſhould have a *miſerable* Bargain of it; becauſe the Happineſs being ſo *interrupted*, and the Miſery ſo *continued*, I muſt in the ſame Space undergo at leaſt *double* the Miſery that I enjoyed Happineſs. And what Man would be contented to live all the *next* Week in a Cauldron of *boiling* Oil, wherein he knows he ſhall be continually *tormented*, provided he may ſpend *this* Week in an *uninterrupted* Enjoyment of the moſt *grateful* Luxuries, which he knows he muſt be as often and as long *inſenſible* as he can be *ſenſible* of?

6*thly*, and *laſtly*, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *fading* and *tranſitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of the Soul is *eternal*. For ſo *impotent* are all this World's *Goods*, that they cannot inſure us of one Moment's Enjoyment of them. It may be, as ſoon as ever we have filled our Bags and Barns with the Wages of our Iniquity, and have a *plentiful* Proviſion for many Years Eaſe and Luxury, we may be ſnatched away upon the very Brinks of Enjoyment, and hurried into a *woeful* Eternity, there to conſume thoſe Years in Miſery and Torment, which we promiſed to ſpend in Pleaſure and Voluptuouſneſs. This you know was the Caſe of the *rich Epicure* in the *Goſpel*; how did the *jolly* Wretch congratulate and applaud himſelf in the *golden* Purchaſe of his Frauds and Oppreſſions? How did he vaunt of his *own* Prudence, and *good* Conduct, and ſtrut and ſwell with *munificent* Conceits of the *happy* Condition he was now arrived to? when all of a

ſudden

ſudden his *unprepared* Soul was ſurprized with a Summons to Eternity? And then how *blank* did the *Fool* look upon the *fatal* News, that *that* Night muſt put an end to all his Hopes and Pleaſures, and deprive him of all thoſe *future* Enjoyments with which he had promiſed to recompenſe all his *paſt* Toils and Labours? With what Regret and Reluctancy was he dragged from the *dear* Purchaſe of his Sweat and Sin? And in what Agonies of Horror did he groan out his *wretched* Spirit, when inſtead of enjoying the *Goods he had laid up for many Years*, he felt himſelf ſinking into a *woeful* Eternity, and lie weltering *there* in *unquenchable* Flames, whilſt he hoped to have been wallowing *here* in Eaſe and Voluptuouſneſs? But ſuppoſe we ſhould enjoy the many Years Eaſe which this *vain-glorious* Fool was diſappointed of, alas thoſe Years will quickly expire and *Threeſcore and ten*, or *Fourſcore* at moſt, is the *utmoſt* Period we can hope to arrive to; but then from thence commences an *Eternity* of Miſery, which *Millions* of *Millions* of Ages can neither ſhrink nor exhauſt, and compared with the *longeſt* Life of Pleaſure, hath not the Proportion of one *ſingle* Moment. So that if in Exchange for our Souls we could purchaſe a Leaſe of Life as long as *Methuſelah*'s, and a Leaſe of Happineſs parallel to that Life, yet in the Concluſion we ſhould find it a moſt *woeful* Bargain; becauſe when both theſe Leaſes are expired, as they muſt at laſt though it be *long* firſt, we muſt remove into a State of *intolerable* Miſery, whoſe Duration will be always equally becauſe it will be always infinitely *diſtant* from a Period; and when we are there, all that *long* Train of Happineſs that

is *past*, will seem but a Minute's Dream in Comparison of that *Eternity* of Misery that is to come. But, *O Good God*, when for *thirty* or *forty* Years Pleasure upon Earth, I have suffered a *thousand* Years Torment in *Hell*, and after that have *endless Thousands of Thousands* more to suffer, how dearly shall I rue my *own* Folly and Madness, that for the sake of a *few* Moments Pleasure have run myself headlong into such an *endless* Misery! Consider therefore, O my Soul! within a *little* while all these *outward* Goods which I have purchased by my Sin, will signify no more to me than if they had never been, and all their *alluring* Relishes will be gone and forgotten *for ever*; but then for *Ten thousand* Millions of Ages after I shall be feeling the Smart, and enduring the Stings of them. When all my *ill-gotten* Wealth is shrunk into a *Winding-sheet*, and my *vast* Possessions into *six Feet* of Earth, and I have none of its Pomps or Pleasures *left* either to go along with, or to follow after me, then will the Guilt of all stick close to me, and raise a Cry on me as *high* as the Tribunal of *God*; a Cry that will draw down an *everlasting* Vengeance on my Head, and ring Peals of Thunder in my Conscience *for ever*. Lord! what a *poor* Amends then is the *momentary* Enjoyments of the Goods of this World to me, and that after a *few* Years must pass into *another*, and there languish away a *long* Eternity under the *intolerable* Anguish of a *damned* Spirit.

And thus you see, upon a *just* Survey of the Gains of this World, and the Loss of a Soul, how infinitely *short* the Happiness of the *one* is to make us any *tolerable* Compensation for the Miseries of the *other*. And if the Gain of all the

World

World be *too little* to countervail this Loſs, what *miſerable* Loſers are the Generality of Men, that forfeit their Souls upon a far *leſs valuable* Conſideration? For no Man was ever yet, or is ever like to be ſo *proſperous* in his Sin, as to gain the whole World by it; that is a *Scramble* in which Millions are engaged, and of which every one will be catching a Share. But alas, for the Generality, the Purchaſe of Mens Sin is ſo *ſmall* and *inconſiderable*, that it is ſcarce a *valuable* Conſideration for the Soul of a Rat. For what doth the *common* Swearer get by all his *ſenſeleſs* and *impertinent* Oaths, which are capable of ſerving no *other* Purpoſe but only to ſtop the Gaps of his Speech, or to man his Rage, that he may rave, and play the Fool a little more genteely? What doth the Drunkard gain by all his Intemperances, but only a *ſhort* Fit of *frantick* Mirth, and *extravagant* Jollity, which, after a *few* Hours, ends in a *ſleepleſs* Night, a *ſick* and *uneaſy* Stomach, and a *ſottiſh* Confuſion over all his Senſes? What doth the *envious* and *malicious* Man get by all his *ſtudied* Miſchiefs and Revenges? When he hath pluck'd out his Enemy's Eye, he cannot put it into his own Head, nor can he encreaſe the Stock of his *own* Happineſs by diminiſhing his Adverſary's. When he hath made *another* the *worſe*, he is never the *better* for it; nor do his Injuries grow *leſs* by being retaliated: So that he vexes and diſquiets himſelf to no purpoſe, but to make his Enemy bleed; he keeps his *own* Wound *green*, and conſequently multiplies Evils in vain, and proſecutes Miſchief only for Miſchief's ſake. I confeſs there are ſome Vices that are not altogether ſo *unprofitable* as theſe; in *ſome* Vices there is a Proſpect of *worldly*

Gain and Greatness, in *others* of *sensitive* Pleasure and Delight; but alas, when after a *few* Days Enjoyment of those Gains and Pleasures, I am called away from them, and transported into a *woeful* Eternity, there to expiate the Guilts of them with those *sharp* and *everlasting* Torments I shall be made to endure, how shall I be astonished at my own *desperate* Folly to think what a *mad* Bargain I have made? What an Happiness I have sold to purchase those Gains? What a Misery I have incurred to grasp and enjoy those Pleasures? O! now what would I give for a *Gaol-delivery* from *Hell*, or but for the *least* Mitigation of my Agonies and Torments! If I had all the Wealth that I purchased by my Sin, and ten thousand times more, how willingly would I part with it to bribe my Flames, and corrupt my Tormentors? O! now I shall wish a thousand and a thousand times that I had rather chosen to famish for want of Bread, than to enjoy those *accursed* Profits and Pleasures that were the Fruits and Wages of my Iniquities; but now alas it will be *too late* to repent. As yet we have the Opportunity to retrieve *our own* Folly, and to revoke and cancel this our *desperate* Bargain, and by our *serious* Repentance and *hearty* Renunciation of the Temptations of this World, we may release ourselves from our Covenant with Death, and Agreement with Hell. But if we out-stay our Opportunity a *few* Moments longer, till Death hath put an end to it, the *fatal* Bargain will be sealed past all Revocation.

OF THE

Divinity *and* Incarnation

OF OUR

SAVIOUR.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father) full of Grace and Truth.

THESE Words contain *Three distinct* Propositions:

I. *The Word was made Flesh:*

II. *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth:*

III. *And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father.* Of each of these I intend to discourse in their Order.

I. The first is, That *the Word was made Flesh.* In handling of which I shall do these three things:

1. Shew you what we are here to understand by the *Word.*

2. Why is it called *The Word.*

3. What we are to understand by *The Word*'s being made Flesh.

1. What is meant by *the Word?* I anſwer in general, That by *the Word* here we are to underſtand Chriſt: For in the following Verſe you will find that this *Word* was he of whom *John the Baptiſt* was the *Forerunner*, and to whom he bare Witneſs, ſaying, *This was he of whom I ſpake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.* And in the other *Evangeliſts* you will find that it was *Chriſt*, whoſe Forerunner the *Baptiſt* was, and to whom he gave this Teſtimony, as you may ſee at your Leiſure, *Mat.* iii. 11. and *Mark* i. 7. *Luke* iii. 16. where you find *John Baptiſt* giving the ſame Teſtimony to *Chriſt* which here he gives to *the Word*, eſpecially *ver.* 27. of this Chapter. Which is a plain Evidence that *Chriſt* and the *Word* are only *different* Titles of the *ſame* Perſon. But that I may more particularly explain to you the Meaning of this Phraſe, I will briefly deliver my Senſe of it in theſe *following* Propoſitions.

1. That this Phraſe, *The Word*, as it is by Way of *Eminence* applied to a *particular* Subject, is derived into the *New Teſtament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

2. That the *New Teſtament* giving no *diſtinct* Explication of it, it is moſt *ſafe* and *reaſonable* to fetch the Senſe of it from that *antient* Theology whence it was derived.

3, That the Theology from whence it was derived, uſes it to ſignify a *vital* and *Divine Subſiſtence*.

4. That therefore our *Saviour*, to whom it is applied in the *New Teſtament*, is that *vital* and *Divine Subſiſtence*.

1.

1. That this Phraſe *The Word*, as it is by way of *Eminency* applied to a *particular* Subject, is derived into the *New Teſtament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles:* Which will plainly appear to any one, that ſhall conſider the *exact* Agreement between thoſe Titles and Characters which are given to our *Saviour* in the *New Teſtament*, and thoſe which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* give to the *Word*, ſo often mentioned in their *Theology*. For as for this Phraſe, ὁ λόγος, *the Word*, it is very antiently uſed in the Writings both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For *Rab. Azriel* in his Treatiſe of Holineſs, quotes it out of the *Book of the Creation*, which was written by *Rab. Abraham*, an antient *Cabaliſt*, who the *Jews* ſay was the Patriarch *Abraham* himſelf. *The Spirit*, ſaith he, meaning the moſt High God, *bringeth forth the Word and the Voice, and theſe three are one God.* Thus alſo it is frequently uſed in the *Chaldee Paraphraſe*, as eminently appropriated to a *Divine Perſon:* So in *Iſaiah* xlv. 17. inſtead of *Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in the Lord*, they read it, *by the Word of the Lord*; and *Jeremiah* i. 8. inſtead of *I am with thee*, they read, *becauſe my Word is with thee*; and *Gen.* xv. 1. inſtead of *I am thy Shield*, they read, *my Word is thy Shield*; and ſo in ſundry other Places. And, which is very obſervable, *Pſalm* cx. 1. inſtead of *the Lord ſaid unto my Lord*, they read, *the Lord ſaid unto his Word*; which Words our *Saviour* applies to himſelf, *Mat.* xxii. 44. as being himſelf that *eternal Word*, or λόγος, there mentioned. And in the ſame Senſe alſo it was very antiently uſed in the Writings of the

Gentile Philosophy. Thus *Zeno*, as *Tertullian* tells us *, speaks of a λόγος by which the World was made, and which he calls *Fate*, and *God*, and the *Soul of Jupiter*. And the *antient Orpheus*, as he is quoted by *Clemens Alexandrinus*†, exhorts Men *to behold and contemplate the divine Word, who is the immortal King of Heaven.* And *Plato*‡ tells us, that the Motions of the Stars were disposed and ordered by *the Word.* By which it is plain, that this Phrase was used as appropriate to a *divine Person*, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, long before the writing of the *New Testament*. And that the *New Testament* derived it from their Writings is apparent, for that it attributes to *Christ* the *same* Titles and Characters which they were wont to attribute to the λόγος. Thus, as the *New Testament* calls *Christ* the *Messias*, *the Word*, so the *Chaldee Paraphrase* expressly tells us, that *Messias* is called *the Word of God. Oseæ, Cap.* 7. Thus, as St. *Paul* calls him the *King immortal*, so *Orpheus*, in the aforenamed Place, calls him ἄναχτα ἀθάνατον, *the King immortal.* And whereas *Christ is said to be the Image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *to be the shining forth of his Glory, and the express Character of his Person*, Heb. i. 3; *Philo* calls him χαραχτὴρ Θεοῦ ||, the σκιὰ and εἰκὼν Θεοῦ §, that is *the Character of God, and the Shadow*

* Turtul. Apologet. c. 36. Pam. Hunc. (*i. e.* λόγον) Zeno determinat factitorem qui cuncta in dispositione formaverit, eundemque & fatum vocari & Deum & animum Jovis. † Stromat Lib. v. p. 607. Εἰς ὃ λόγον Θεῖον βλέψας, τάτῳ πειστέον φρενὶ Εὐσεβέων κεφαλὴς νοερὸν κύτος· εὖ δ' ἐπὶ βαινε Ἀτρεμιστᾶ μέσην δ' ἐσόρα κόσμοιο ἄναχτα Ἀθάνατον. ‡ Epinomis. || Lib. ii. de Agriculturâ, p. 169. Edit. Genev, 1613. § Leg. Alleg. l. ii. p. 60.

Shadow and Image of God: And *Plotin*, *That it is a Light ſtreaming forth from God, even as Brightneſs doth from the Sun**. And as St. *John*, in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, tells us, That *the Word was from the Beginning with God, and that it was God*; *ſo Philo* tells us, That by *Prerogative of Elderſhip he abided with the Father*; and *Zeno*, in the afore-named Place, *That he is God*; and *Plotin* † tells us, *That being the Word of God, and the Image of God, he is inſeparably conjoined with him.* And whereas *Chriſt* tells us, That *he is the Light of the World*, John viii. 12. *the Manna which cometh down from Heaven*; and *the Bread of Life*, John vi. 33, 35; the ſame *Philo* ſtiles him *the Word, the Light* ‡, *the Manna*‖, *the* ἄρτος and τροφὴ ἣν ἐδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς τῇ ψυχῇ §, that is, *the Bread and Food which God hath given to the Soul.* And whereas it is ſaid, that *the Father is in Chriſt*, that *he dwells and abides in him*, John xiv. 10; the ſame Author ſays, πατρὸς δὲ οἰκος ὁ λόγος, ἐν ᾧ διαιτᾶται ‖‖‖; that is, *the Word is the Houſe of the Father, in whom he dwells.* Whereas *Chriſt* is ſaid to *have a Name*, Phil. ii. 9. and to be advanced *above all Principalities and Powers*, Eph. i. 21; *Philo* tells us, that this *divine Word* is ὑπεράνω πανὸς τοῦ κόσμου καὶ πρεσβύτατος τῶν ὅσα γέγονε ¶; that is, *above all Worlds, and the moſt antient of all Things that are.* Whereas *Chriſt* is ſaid to be *the High Prieſt over the Houſe of God.* Heb. x. 21; *Philo* tells us, that *the World is the Temple of*

* Enn. 5. l. c. 6. †Ibid. ‡Philo de Opif. mundi, p. 4, 5. ‖Quod det. pot. inſ. ſol. p. 137. §Leg. Alleg. l. ii. p. 70, and 71. ‖‖‖DeMigrat. Abrah. p. 304. ¶ Leg. Alleg. p. 71.

of God, ἐν ᾧ ἢ ἀρχειρεὺς ὁ πρωτόγονος αὐτοῦ θεῖος λόγος *; that is, *in which the first-born divine Word is the High Priest.* Whereas *Christ* is said to be *the Son of God, and the first-born of every Creature: Plato* calls him, *the begotten Son of the Good* †; *Plotin, the Son of God* ‡; and *Philo, the first-begotten Son and Word of God* §. Again, whereas *God* is said to have created the World by Christ, *Heb.* i. 2. and to have committed the Government of it to him; *Philo* calls the θεῖος λόγος, the ὁ ἐπὶ πάλιν ἄρχος καὶ κυβερνήτης τῶν πάντων ‖; that is, *the Governor of all Things*, and the ὕπαρχος Θεοῦ **, *the Viceroy of God*; and also ὄργανον Θεοῦ δι' οὗ ὁ κόσμος κατεσκευάσθη ‡‡; that is, *the Instrument of God by whom he made the World.* As in *Christ the Fulness of the Godhead is* said *to dwell*, Colos. ii. 9; so *Plotin* tells us of the νοῦς, or λόγος, *that it is filled with God* §§. As *Christ* is called the *great Shepherd of our Souls*, 1 *Pet.* ii. 25; so *Philo* tells us, that *God, who is King and Pastor of the World, hath appointed the Word his first-begotten Son*, τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀγέλης ὅτι μεγάλου βασιλέως ὕπαρχος διαδέξεται ‖‖‖, *to undertake the Care of his sacred Flock, as his own Viceroy and Substitute:* And accordingly in the same Place, he makes *The Word* to be that *Angel* whom *God* had promised to send before the Camp of *Israel* to conduct them through the *Wilderness*. In short, as the *Angels* are said to be *subject* unto *Christ*, 1 Pet. iii. 22. and as *Christ* is said to be the *Angel*, or *Messenger* of *God*,

* De Somniis, p. 463. † De Repub. l. vi. ‡ Enn. 5. l. viii. c. 12 § De Somn. p. 463. ‖ De Cherub. p. 88. ** De Somn. p. 466. ‡‡ Lib. Cherub. p. 100. §§ Ennead. 5. l. iii. c. 12. ‖‖‖ De Agricult. p. 152.

God, John ix. 4; so *Philo* calls *the most antient Word* the ὁ ἀρχάγγελος *; that is, *the Prince of the Angels*, and the τὸν ἄγγελον Θεοῦ †; *the Angel or Messenger of God*, And, to name no more, as *Christ* is called the *Mediator of the New Covenant*, Heb. xii. 24. and the *Intercessor between God and Man*, Heb. vii. 25. and the *Propitiation* and *Atonement:* so, saith *Philo*, (which is highly worthy of our Observation) the Word ἱκέτης μέν ἐστι, &c ‡. *is the Intercessor for Mortals with the immortal God*, and also *the Ambassador of that great King to his Subjects*; *which Office*, saith he, *he willingly undertook, saying, I will stand in the Middle between the Lord and you, as being neither unborn as God, nor born as you*; *but being a Medium between those two Extremes, I will be a Pledge for both*; *for his Creatures, that they shall not utterly apostatize from him*; *for God, that he will not be wanting in his Fatherly Care towards them.* And in another Place he tells us, that the Θεῖος λόγος is τῆς ἀρεσκείας κεφαλὴ καὶ τέλος §; that is, *the Beginning and the End of God's Good-Will to the World*; which is all one with Propitiation.

And these Authorities of *Philo* I have the rather insisted upon, because he being a *Jew*, and a *Platonick Philosopher*, must needs understand the *Theology* of *Jews* and *Gentiles:* and living about the Time of our *Saviour*, he must be supposed to have written in *Terms* that were then in use, and were very well understood both by *Jews* and *Gentiles:* And if so, then it must

* Quæst. Rerum divin. hær. p. 397. † De Somn. p. 466. ‡ Quæst. Rerum. divin. hær. p. 397. § De Somniis, p. 447.

muſt neceſſarily follow, that this Phraſe *The Word*, ſo *common* in that *Author*, was very commonly uſed both by *Jews* and *Gentiles* in our Saviour's Time, and conſequently, that it was derived from them, and ſo appropriated to our *Saviour* by the *inſpired Writers* of the *New Teſtament*. And, indeed it is not to be imagined how thoſe *inſpired Writers* ſhould ever have ſo exactly agreed with the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in the Titles and Characters of the *eternal Word*, had not either they themſelves, or *the Spirit of God*, which dictated to them, purpoſely derived it from them.

2. That the *New Teſtament* giving no *diſtinct* Explication of this Phraſe *The Word*, it is moſt *ſafe* and *reaſonable* to fetch the Senſe of it from that *antient Theology* whence it was derived. I do not deny but it is uſual with all Writers to uſe *Terms* and *Phraſes* by way of Accommodation, and to illuſtrate their Senſe by alluding to ſomething that is like it, and therefore are not always to be underſtood in the Senſe which thoſe *Terms* and *Phraſes* do moſt commonly ſignify, but in a Senſe that hath ſome Proportion with it, as the Drift and Connection of their Diſcourſe doth plainly intimate. But when Writers uſe Words in a *literal* Senſe, without any Note of Alluſion, and without explaining themſelves into any *different* Senſe, either they muſt mean the *ſame* Thing which thoſe Words do commonly ſignify, or elſe they muſt mean to deceive and impoſe upon their Readers. And thus ſtands the Caſe before us; our *Saviour* is here ſtiled *The Word*, a *Term of Art*, which was very *common* both in the *Jewiſh*

Jewiſh and *Gentile Philoſophy*; and neither here, nor any where elſe, is there the *leaſt* Intimation that he is called ſo, only by way of Alluſion; nor is it in all the *New Teſtament* explained into any *other* Senſe than that wherein it was commonly uſed; and therefore the Intent of the *ſacred Writers*, in uſing it, muſt be either to denote the ſame Thing which it ſignified before, or to deceive and impoſe upon the World. But doubtleſs, if the *Holy Spirit*, which inſpired thoſe Writers, had meant any thing elſe by it than what it ordinarily ſignifies, he would have told us of it, and not have given us ſuch an *unavoidable* Occaſion to miſtake in ſo *great* a Doctrine, by clothing its Senſe in ſuch a *Phraſe* as generally ſignifies what he never meant. For when he called *Chriſt* by the *ſame* Name, and attributed the *ſame* Titles and Characters by which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to deſcribe their ΛΟΓΟΣ, he could not but foreſee that all *inquiſitive* Perſons would be apt to conclude that he meant the *ſame* Thing; and therefore if he had not meant ſo, he would doubtleſs either not have given him that Name, and thoſe Titles, or elſe, to prevent our being impoſed upon by them, he would have explained them into ſome other Meaning; which ſince he hath not done, we may ſafely and rationally conclude, that he hath meant the ſame Thing by this Name and thoſe Titles, with thoſe from whom he did derive them; and conſequently that the moſt *certain* Way for us to underſtand what is the Senſe of Chriſt's being *The Word*, is to conſider what thoſe *Jews* and *Gentiles* meant by

by it from whose *Philosophy* it was first borrowed and derived.

3. That both the *Jewish* and *Gentile Theology* used this Phrase, *The Word*, to signify a *vital* and *Divine Subsistence*. For as for the *Jews*, it is plain that by *The Word* they meant the *Messias*; and therefore, *Ps.* cx. which they say contains the Mysteries of the *Messias*, the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, instead of *the Lord said unto my Lord*, read *the Lord said unto his Word*; that is, consequently, to his *Messias*. And *Rab. Arama* upon *Genesis*, explaining that Passage in *Ps.* cvii. 20. *The Lord sent forth his Word, and they were healed*, expressly tells us, that by this *Word* is meant the *Messias*. And *Rab. Simeon* the Son of *Johni*, expounding those Words of *Job.* xix. 26. *Yet in my Flesh shall I see God*, saith, that the Mercy which proceeds from the *highest* Wisdom of *God*, shall be crowned by *The Word*, and take Flesh of a Woman; by which it is plain, that by *The Word* he understood the *Messias*. And that by the *Messias* they understood a *divine Subsistence*, is evident from *sundry* Places in the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, which often applies the Name *Jehovah* to the *Messias*; which according to the Opinion of the *Jews*, ought not to be imparted to any Creature; as particularly, *Isa.* xxviii. 5. *Jehovah Sabbaoth* (for so it is in the *Hebrew*) *shall be a Crown of Glory unto the Residue of his People*; which those Interpreters understand concerning the *Messias*. So also, *Isa.* xviii, 7. *In that Time shall the Present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts*; that is, say they, unto the *Messias*. So also, *Jer.* xxxiii. 16.

By

By *Jehovah our Righteouſneſs*, they underſtand the *Meſſias*; and by the Name of the *Everlaſting*, *Moſes Haderſan* underſtands the Name of the *Meſſias*, or *Anointed King*. And certainly, had they not believed the *Meſſias* to be a *divine Subſiſtence*, they would never have attributed to him this *incommunicable* Name of God; of which they had ſo *high* a Veneration, that they thought it *too* ſacred for *any* Creature to name, and much more to aſſume. And the *Commentary* upon the fourth *Pſalm* expreſly ſaith, *Becauſe the Gentiles ceaſe not to ask us, Where is our God? the Time will come that God will ſit among the Righteous, ſo as they ſhall be able to point him out with the Finger*; which plainly refers to the Coming of the *Meſſias*. And ſo alſo the *Septuagint* change *Shaddai*, the *undoubted* Name of the *Omnipotent God*, into ΛΟΓΟΣ, *The Word*, *Ezekiel* i. 24. where inſtead of *the Voice of God*, (as it is in the *Hebrew*) they read φωνὴ τοῦ λόγου, *the Voice of the Word of God*. And ſo alſo the *afore-named Paraphraſe*, as I have already hinted, doth often uſe the *Word of God* for *God* himſelf, and that more eſpecially with relation to the Creation of the World. Thus inſtead of *I made the Earth*, *Iſa.* xiv. 12. they read it, *I by my Word made the Earth:* And inſtead of *God made Man*, *Gen.* i. 27. the *Jeruſalem Targum* reads, *And the Word of the Lord* made Man: And inſtead of *They heard the Voice of the Lord*, *Gen.* iii. 8. *the Paraphraſe* reads it, *And they heard the Voice of the Word of the Lord God.* And *Philo* expreſly calls *this Word* the δεύτερον Θεὸν, or *ſecond* God, next to the πατέρα τῶν πάντων.

And

And as the *Jews* believed *The Word* to be a *divine Subſiſtence*, ſo did the *Gentiles* alſo. For ſo *Numenius* the *Pythagorean*, as he is quoted by *St. Cyril**, calls the *Father* the *Firſt*, and the *Word* the *Second God*; and *Plotin* tells us †, *that this Word, or Image of God, beholdeth God, and it inſeparably joined with him*; and *Porphyry*, as he is cited by the *fore-named* Father ‡, tells us, that the *Eſſence of God extends to three In-Beings*, viz. *the higheſt Good, which is the Father, and the Maker of all Things, which is the Word, and the Soul of the World*; and theſe he alſo calls the *firſt*, and *ſecond*, and *third God*. And of *Pythagoras*, *Proclus* the *Platoniſt* affirms, *that he commended three Gods together in ONE*, (even as *Plato* alſo doth) the *ſecond* of which was the *Word* or *Wiſdom*, whereunto he attributes the Creation of the World. And *Plato*, in his 6th Epiſtle, ſo far owns the *Divinity* of the *Word*, that he earneſtly exhorts his Friends that they ſhould ὑπομνύειν τὸν τῶν πάντων Θεὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶνδε ὄντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, τοῦτε ἡγεμόνος καὶ αἰτίου πατέρα κύριον; that is, *invocate God, the Governor of all Things that are and ſhall be, and alſo the Lord and Father of that Prince and Governor*; by the *firſt* of which he evidently means *the Word*, ſince 'tis to *the Word* that he elſewhere || attributes the Government of the *Stars* and *Heavenly Bodies*. By all which it is apparent, that by *the Word* they underſtood ſome *divine Subſiſtence*, whoſe Nature is exalted above all *finite* Beings whatſoever; and therefore,

4. And

* Cyril. cont. Julian. l. viii. †Enn. 5. l. i. c. vi. ‡ Cyril. ibid. l. i. || Plat. Epinom.

4. And lastly, Our *Saviour*, to whom this Phrase *the Word* is applied, must be that *divine Person* or *Subsistence*. And so we find him stiled in the first Verse of this Chapter; *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Which Expressions are so exactly agreeable to the Phrase of the *Gentile Theology*, that *Amelius*, the Disciple of *Plotin*, and a *great* Enemy to the *Christians*, was forced to acknowledge that this is that *Word* which was from *Everlasting*, and by whom all Things were made, as *Heraclitus* supposed: And, *per Jovem*, saith he, *Barbarus iste*, meaning *St. John*, *cum nostro* Platone *consentit*, *Verbum Dei in Ordine Principii esse* *. *This Barbarian is of our* Plato's *Mind, that the Word of God is ranked among the Principles.* And indeed, unless we understand this Place of the *eternal Deity* of *the Word*, I know not how it will be possible to make any *tolerable* Sense of it; for if by *in the Beginning* here, we understand, as the *Socinians* would have us, in the *Beginning of the Gospel* when *John Baptist* began to preach, the Words will imply a *gross* Tautology, and the Sense of them must be this, that *Christ* was when *John Baptist* preached that he was, or which is all one, that he was when he was: For how can it be worthy of an *Apostle* so solemnly to assert, that *the Word* had a *Being* in the Beginning of the *Gospel*, when we know the *Baptist* taught as much himself? Who therefore came *baptizing with Water, that he should be made manifest to Israel*, John i. 31. And

* St. Austin. De Civit. Dei. l. x.

when St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, who wrote before, taught us more than this, *viz.* That he was in being *thirty* Years before, when we are sure it was as true of any *other* then living as of *the Word*, even of *Judas* that betrayed him, and *Pilate* who condemned him. By *in the Beginning*, therefore must be meant the *Beginning* of the World; and that even then, *The Word was with God, and the Word was God.* So Phil. ii, 6. 7. *Who being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men.* From whence these *three* Conclusions do most naturally result; *First*, That *Christ* was *in the Form of a Servant* as soon as he was made Man: *Secondly*, That he was *in the Form of God*, before he was *in the Form of a Servant:* And, *Thirdly*, That he was *in the Form of God* that is, did as really and truly subsist in the *Divine Nature*, as in the *Form of a Servant*, or in the Nature of Man: For the Words literally translated run thus; But emptied himself taking the Form of a Servant, being in the Likeness of Men: Which plainly implies, that *Christ* was *full* before he emptied himself, that he emptied himself by taking the *Form of a Servant*, that he took the *Form of a Servant* by being made in the *Likeness of Men*; which *Emptying* presupposes a *precedent Plenitude*, and which *Plenitude* consisted in being so in the *Form of God*, as to think it *no Robbery to be equal with God.* So *Rev.* i. 11. he so lemnly proclaims his *own* Divinity; *I am Alpha and*

and Omega, the first and the last; which is the *incommunicable* Title by which *God* describes his own Being, and distinguishes it from all others. And *Isa.* xliv. 6. *I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.* These, and many other plain Assertions there are in the *New Testament*, of the *Eternal Deity* of the *Blessed Word.* But since the *Eternal God* was constantly, both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, signified by this Phrase *the Word*, there is no Reason to imagine that St. *John* should make use of it in any *other* Notion; since in so doing he would have imposed upon the World, and taken an *effectual* Course, to make us believe that he meant what he never intended.

And so I have done with the *first* Thing proposed, which was to shew you what is here meant by Christ's being *the Word*; the Design of which, you see, is to express his *Eternal Godhead* and *Divinity.*

2. I now proceed to the *next* Thing proposed, which was to shew you for what Reason it is that he is here called the *Word.* In Answer whereunto, it is to be considered that the Word ΛΟΓΟΣ hath a *two-fold* Signification: *First*, It signifies *Reason*, which is the inferring *one* Thing from *another*, and this is the Birth and Offspring of the Mind. *Secondly*, It signifies *Speech*, which is an *audible* Expression of our Thoughts and Reasonings, and this is the Image and Interpreter of our Minds; and it is also the *Executor* of the Mind, especially in those who are in *sovereign* Authority, and do rule by their Word and Command. Now our *Blessed*

Saviour is called *the Word* upon *both* these Accounts, both as he is the *Reason* and the *Speech* of God; and accordingly his being *the Word* denotes these four Things,

1*st*, His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father.

2*dly*, His being the *perfect* Image of that Mind.

3*dly*, His being the *Interpreter* of his Father's Mind to us.

4*thly*, His being the *Executor* of his Father's Mind.

1*st*, His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father, even as our *Word* or *Reason* is the Issue and Offspring of our Minds. For it was the Opinion both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that the *eternal Word* is nothing else but that most *perfect Notion*, *Idea* and *Conception*, which *God* from the Beginning had formed of *himself*, and Beings in his own Mind. For thus the *Jews* tell us, that every thing *below* hath some Root above; which Roots, say they, are the *Sephiroth*, or Seals by which all these *inferior* Substances are stamped, and shaped, and fashioned; and these Seals, they tell us, are those most *perfect Ideas* of Things which *God* did form in his own Mind, according to which he fashioned all the Beings that are in the World. *For*, they *, *all the three Worlds*, that is, *the Rational*, *Sensative*, *and Inanimate*, *were printed with the Print*, *and sealed with the same Seal*; (that is, that *great* Seal in the Mind of *God*, consisting of the *Ideas* of all Things) *and that which is sealed*, *and receiveth the Sealing here below*,

* Vide *Dr.* Cudworth *of the Union of Christ and the Church.*

below, is like to the Shape and Form of thoſe Things above which did ſeal and ſtamp the Signature upon them. And theſe *three* Worlds, ſay they, being one below *another*, *God* ſet upon them the Seal of *Sephiroth* ſo hard, that he printed them quite through the Bottom of them, that is, he ſtamped them all into an *exact* Reſemblance to thoſe *Ideas* which he had formed of them in his own Mind. So that according to them, before *God* made the World, he framed the *Idea* and *Model* of it in his own Underſtanding, which, together with that *Idea*, or Notion, which from all *Eternity* he conceived of himſelf, they called the ΛΟΓΟΣ or *Eternal Word of God.* Hence *Philo* calls *the Word of God*, the εἰκόνα Θεῦ, and alſo the σφραγίδα *, and the ἀρχέτυπον παράδειγμα, and the ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν ‖ : And tells us, that as a City before it was made, exiſted only in the Mind of the Builder; ſo the World had no other Place, ἢ τὸν Θεῖον λόγον τὸν ταῦτα διακοσμήσαντα; that is, *than the Divine Word that made it.* And afterwards he tells us, that the *intellectual World*, that is, the World which contains the *Ideas* of all Things, οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐστιν ἢ Θεῦ λόγον ἤδη κοσμοποιοῦντος §, *is nothing elſe but the Word of God now making the World*; and accordingly the *Jews* call *the Word* the Wiſdom of *God*, and tells us ‡, that *this Wiſdom is of the moſt inward Underſtanding of God, who beholds himſelf in himſelf.* From all which it is apparent, that the *Jews* attributed the Original of this *divine Word*

* De Mundi Opif. p. 5. ‖ Ibid. p. 3. § Ibid. p. 4.
‡ *Rab.* Iſaac Ben Schola *on the laſt Verſes of the* cxi. *and* cxii. *Pſalms.*

to the *Mind* of the Father, it being according to their *Divinity*, nothing else but that most *perfect Conception* and *Idea* which *God* from *everlasting* formed of *himself* and all *other* Beings, in his own Mind. In which Opinion, the most *divine Philosophers* of the *Gentiles* also do most exactly consent. And hence they generally call *the Word* λόγος, or *Understanding* of the Father, he being the *perfect Idea*, or *Conception* by which the Father understands *himself* and all other Things. And accordingly *Alcinous* tells us *, that *both* Socrates *and* Plato *taught that God is a Mind, and that in the same there is a certain Idea which in Respect of God, is that Knowledge which God hath of himself, and in Respect of the World, is the Pattern or Mould thereof, and in Respect of itself, is very Essence.* And *Plotin* tells us †, that *God is both the Party that is conceived in the Mind or Understanding, and also the Party that conceives him*; and he makes the *Word* to be that which *God* doth mind in himself, which is *Himself*, and his own *immense* Perfections; and that the Nature of that *Idea* of himself which he beholds in *himself*, is an Act that issues from him, which consists in beholding and minding of himself, and in beholding him becomes the *self-same* Thing with him; and this *Understanding* or *Knowledge* which *God* hath of himself, he calls §, *the Son of the Sovereign Father, that bears the like Resemblance to him, as the Light doth the Sun in the Firmament.* And to name no more

* Alcin de Doctrinâ Platonis. † Plot. Enn. 5. l vi. c. i.
§ En. 5. l. viii. c. xii. and Enn. 5. l. i. c. vii.

more, *Porphyry*, as he is quoted by St. *Cyril*, tells us, *That it was the Doctrine of* Plato, *that of the Good* (which elsewhere he calls the Father) *is begotten an Understanding in a Manner unknown to Men, in which are all Things that truly are, and the Essences of all Things that have a Being*; that is, the *substantial Ideas* of *God*, and all *created* Things whatsoever; and upon this Account it is, that they call this divine Subsistence *the Word*, because it was generated by the *Mind* of the Father, even as our Words are generated by our Minds. And accordingly the *antient Jews* and *Christian Fathers*, do generally expound that *great Elogium* of *Wisdom*, Prov. viii. concerning the *Eternal Word*; where it is said, that *Wisdom was set up from everlasting, and possessed by God in the Beginning of his Way, that it was brought forth by him before the World*; and that when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth, then *was it by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him*, Ver. 22—31. And this Notion the *New Testament* doth plainly refer to, when it calls *Christ the Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. which is the same Title that both *Jews* and *Platonists* give to *the Word* upon the Account of his being that *Eternal Knowledge* and *Understanding* which *God* hath of *himself* and all *other* Beings; and in this, *John* i. 4. the *Apostle* seems plainly to hint this Notion to us; for speaking there of *the Word*, *In him*, saith he, *was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men.* Now I think it will be hard to give

any *natural* Account how that *Life* that was in *the World ſhould* enlighten Men, unleſs we ſuppoſe his very *Life* and *Being* to conſiſt in *Knowledge* and *Underſtanding*; for by the *Light of Men* here, is plainly meant that *Divine Knowledge* which is revealed to the World by *Chriſt*; and this *divine* Knowledge he tells us is the very *Life* of *the Word*, or the *Life* that was in *the Word:* And afterwards he expreſly calls *the Word the Light* itſelf, from whence all our Knowledge of *God* and Goodneſs is derived, *v.* 9. which is exactly the ſame with what *Philo* ſaith of *the Word*, *viz.* that *he is the intellectual Sun that is altogether Light*; and with what *Plotin* ſaith *of the* νῦς, or *Divine Mind* *, *that he is a Light ſhed forth every where, ſtreaming from God, and begotten of him*; which is a plain Evidence of Chriſt's being the *ſubſtantial Light*, *Knowledge*, or *Idea*, of all Things which *God* from *Everlaſting* formed in his own Mind, and of his being therefore called *the Word* of God, becauſe he is the *Offspring* of God's Underſtanding, even as our Reaſon is the *Offspring* of ours.

2dly, He is called *the Word of God*, becauſe he is the *perfect* Image of *God*, even as the Word is the Image of the Mind: For thus, as I have already told you, the *Eternal Word* is very frequently called the *Image* of God, both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles:* For ſo *Plotin* †, that *this Divine Underſtanding*, *being the very Word of* God, *and Image of* God, *everlaſtingly beholds* God, *and cannot be ſeparated from*

* Enn 5. l. 1. † Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 6.

from him; and * *that it is the begotten Iſſue, Word, and Image of the Sovereign God.* And *Plato* himſelf calls him † *the begotten Son of the Good, and moſt like unto him in all Things*; the ἔκγονον τῦ ἀγαθῦ ϗ ὁμοιότατον ἐκείνῳ, and afterwards, τὸν τῦ ἀγαθῦ ἔκγονον ὃν ταγαθόν ἐγγέννησεν ἀνάλογον ἑαυτῷ; that is, *the begotten Son of the Good, who is moſt like unto himſelf.* And *Rab. Moſes*, the Son of *Nehemen*, as he is quoted by *Maſius*, proving that *that Angel of God's Preſence* which went before the Camp of *Iſrael* was the *Meſſias*, or *Eternal Word*, tells us, that he is therefore called the *Angel of God's Preſence, nimirum qui ille Angelus eſt facies Dei*; *becauſe he is the Face of God, in whom God's Face was to be ſeen.* And ſo *Philo* the *Jew* alſo doth very frequently call *the Word* ‡ the *Image and Reſemblance of God*, and the ἀπεικόνισμα, *the moſt perfect and exact Repreſentation of God.* For they ſuppoſe that *God* being *Omniſcient*, he muſt neceſſarily know himſelf, and that knowing himſelf, neceſſarily he muſt act *ad extremum Virum*, to the utmoſt of his Power, even as all *other neceſſary* Agents do; that acting to the utmoſt of his Power, he muſt by knowing himſelf produce as perfect an *Image*, *Idea*, or *Notion* of himſelf in his own Underſtanding, as it was poſſible for him to do; that it was poſſible for him to produce ſuch a *vital* and *ſubſtantial Idea* of himſelf as is veſted with all the *infinite* Perfections of his Nature; and conſequently that ſuch an *Idea* he hath produced, and that this *Idea*

* Ibid. l. ii. † Plato de Repub. l. vi. p. 478. ‡ Philo Legis Alleg. l. ii. p. 60.

Idea is the *Eternal Word.* For *God* can do whatsoever doth not imply a Contradiction: Now there is nothing in *God* but what he can communicate without a Contradiction, but only *Self-existence*; that implies a Contradiction indeed, for *God* to cause *another* Thing to be without any Cause, and to exist of itself. But as for all his *other* Perfections he may communicate them; and when he acts necessarily, as he is supposed to do in the Generation of *the Word* he must, because then he acts to his utmost Possibility. So then *the Word* must have the same *Nature*, *Essence*, and *Perfections* with the *Father*; and the only *imaginable* Difference between them must be this; that whereas the *Father* exists of himself, *the Word* exists of the *Father*; which is exactly agreeable to the *Catholick Notion* of *Christians.* And indeed if it be granted that *God*, who is infinitely *knowing*, must necessarily know himself perfectly, then it will seem to follow, that there must be the *same* Perfections in that *Idea* or Notion by which he knows *himself*, that there are in himself; for else it is not one *perfect Idea* of him. And hence it is that our Notions do so imperfectly *resemble* Things, because we cannot communicate to them that *Life* and *Substance* that is in the Things themselves; and therefore if *God* knows himself perfectly, as he must needs do, being infinitely *knowing*, he must communicate *Life* and *Substance* to the Notion of himself, or else 'twill be no *perfect* Notion of his *Life* and *Substance*; and he must communicate to it all the *immense* Perfections of his own Nature, or else 'twill be no *perfect* Notion of his own

own Perfections. So then the *eternal Word*, which is here ſuppoſed to be the moſt *perfect* Notion of the *Father*, muſt be a *vital* and *ſubſtantial Idea*, endued with all the Perfections of the *Divine Nature*, which is alſo very agreeable with the *Chriſtian* Notion of the *Divine Word:* For he is deſcribed to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Character of his Perſon*, Heb. i. 3. and being ſo, he muſt neceſſarily be what *God* is, *i. e. God eſſential*, or elſe he cannot be the *perfect* Image, and *expreſs* Character of *God*. And accordingly in the *New Teſtament* he is called *God over all, bleſſed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. and the Perfections of the *Divine Nature* are very frequently attributed to him, as particularly *Omniſcience*, John xvi. 30. *Eternity*, Heb. i. 12. and Rev. xxii. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the firſt and the laſt.* So that upon this Account alſo he may very properly be called *the Word of God*, becauſe as our Words are the Images of our Minds, ſo *He* is the moſt *perfect* Image of *God*.

3*dly*, He is called *the Word*, becauſe he is the *Interpreter* of the Father's Mind, even as our Words alſo are the Interpreters of our Minds to *others*. And this *Philo* the *Jew* doth alſo take Notice of, as the *proper* Work and Office of *the Word* to be πρεσβευτὴς τῷ ἡγεμόνι πρὸς τὸ ὑπήκοον *, *the Ambaſſador of the great King to his Subjects, to communicate his Mind and Will to them*; and alſo *the Angel and Meſſenger of God to Men, to declare his Will and Pleaſure to them*;

* Quis rer. div. hær. p. 397.

them: And that in the Execution of this Office he doth τοῖς μὲν ὡς βασιλεὺς ἃ χρὴ πράττειν ἐξεπιτάγματος παραγγέλλειν, &c. * *Some as a King he commands what they shall do; others, as a School-master, he profitably instructs; others, as a Counsellor, he faithfully admonishes; all which he performs as the Interpreter of the Mind of God.* And elsewhere he calls him the Θεοποιοῦ ἥλιος †, *the Divine Sun that enlightens the Souls of Men*; and elsewhere he expressly calls him *the Interpreter of the Mind of God to Men:* So that it seems it was upon this Account as well as others, that he was called by the *Antients, the Word of God.* And the same Account is given of it in the *New Testament.* So *John* i. 18. *No Man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Where there is a *particular* Reason assigned, why though *other* Men interpreted the Mind of *God* to us, yet *Christ* alone is called *the Word of God*; because he only was the *immediate* Interpreter of the *Divine* Will, even as the Word which we speak is of ours. For he was in the very Bosom of the Father, and there understood his Mind not by the Instructions of an *Angel*, nor by *Dreams* and *Visions*, nor only by the *Holy Ghost*, but by an *immediate* Intuition of his Thoughts and Purposes, which from all *Eternity* were exposed to his View and Prospect. For as St. *Gregory Nazianzen* hath observed, He had the *same* Relation to the Father, as the *inward* Thought hath to the Mind, because of his *intimate* Conjunction with him, and Power to

* De Somn. p. 461. † De Charitate. p. 552.

to declare him to the World. For the *Father* is known by the *Son*, who is a *brief* and *eaſy* Demonſtration of the *Father*, as every thing that is begotten is σιωπῶν λόγος, *the ſilent Word of that which doth beget it.*

4*thly*, and *laſtly*, He is called *the Word*, becauſe he is the *Executor* of his Father's Will, even as the Word and Command of a King is the Executor of his Will and Pleaſure; For according to the Senſe of the *Antients*, God hath from the very Beginning governed the World by his *eternal* ΛΟΓΟΣ, whom they therefore call the *immortal King*, the *Governor of all things that are, or ſhall be*, and the *Viceroy of the great God*, as I have already ſhewed you at large. And it was by this *Word* that *God* executed his Will when he made the World: *For by his Word he made the Heavens, and all the Hoſt of them by the Breath of his Mouth*, Pſal. xxxiii. 6. He did but ſay the Word, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; and to his *powerful* and *efficacious Fiat*, the whole Frame of Nature was but a *real Echo*. For theſe Expreſſions, *Let there be Light*, and *let there be a Firmament*, &c. are not perhaps ſo to be underſtood as if *God* did actually pronounce thoſe Syllables, but they rather ſeem to be a *popular* Deſcription of the *infinite* Energy of the *Eternal Word* by which *God* made the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, to whom it was as eaſy to give Being to the World as it was to command it to be; and that Paſſage of the Pſalmiſt, *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made*, and of the Author to the *Hebrews*, *Heb.* xi. 3. that *the Worlds were framed*

framed by the Word of God, ſeem rather to denote that *powerful* Act of Creation which was exerted by the *vital* and *ſubſtantial Word* of *God*, whereby he inſtantly, and, as it were, with a Word's ſpeaking, gave *Exiſtence* to thoſe Beings he intended to create, than any *articulate* Words or Phraſes, pronounced by God himſelf; becauſe in this Chapter, and many other Places of the *New Teſtament*, it is expreſly ſaid, that *God* made the World by *Chriſt*, who is that *living* and *ſubſtantial Word* that was with *God* from the Beginning. Well therefore may *Chriſt* be called *the Word* of *God*, ſince by him *God* doth as effectually execute his Will, as if it were done by the Word of his own Mouth. For *Chriſt* hath ſuch Power, both in *Heaven* and *Earth*, that at his Word and Command all things are preſently done according to his Will; and therefore you may obſerve in that *Viſion* to St. *John*, Rev. xix. 13. *Jeſus*, being repreſented as the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords, clothed in a royal purple Robe*, is called by the Name of *the Word of God*, when he was executing the *Divine* Vengeance upon the *Nations* by that Power which he hath at God's right Hand.

3. I now paſs on to the *third* and *laſt* Thing, namely, what we are to underſtand by *the Word's being made Fleſh*; of which I ſhall give you a *brief* Account, and then conclude with a few ſhort Inferences from the whole. Which Words, *being made Fleſh*, we ought not ſo to underſtand as if the *eternal Word* was changed, or converted into Fleſh, as *Cerinthus* taught; or as if the Fleſh was changed, or converted into

the

the Word, as *Valentinus* ridiculouſly aſſerted; for the *Deity* is *immutable*, and as it can be changed into *nothing*, ſo *nothing* can be changed into it. But by *Fleſh* we are to underſtand *Man*, a *Part* being put for the *whole*; for ſo the *Scripture* doth very frequently call Man *Fleſh*, that being *one* of the Ingredients of his Nature. Thus *Pſalm* lvi. 4. *I will not fear what Fleſh can do unto me.* Jeremiah xvii. 5. *Curſed be the Man that maketh Fleſh his Arm*; that is, that puts his Confidence in Man. *Mat.* xxiv. 22. *Except thoſe Days be ſhortened, no Fleſh ſhall be ſaved*; that is, no Man: And *Rom.* iii. 20. *No Fleſh ſhall be juſtified in his Sight*; that is, no Man ſhall be juſtified. So here, *The Word was made Fleſh*; that is, *The Word* was made Man. Not that the *Divine Nature* was converted into the Nature of Man, but the Meaning is, *it* was made *one* with Man, even as our *Soul* is not turned into, nor confounded with the *Body*; yet they *two*, though *diſtinct* in Natures, grow into one Man: So the *Manhood* of *Chriſt* was aſſumed, or taken into *the Word*, both being united into *one* Perſon, the Natures being preſerved *entire* and *diſtinct*, without any Mixture or Confuſion. For as the *fourth General Council* hath defined it, *He was ſo made Fleſh, that he ceaſed not to be the Word, never changing that he was, but aſſuming that which he was not.* And though our *Humanity* was advanced by it, yet his *Divinity* was not at all diminiſhed; and the Myſtery of Godlineſs, *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*, was no Detriment to the *Godhead*, which is always *unchangeably* the ſame: And therefore the *ſeeming* Harſhneſs of this Expreſſion may be

be molified by comparing it with others of the same Import; for elsewhere it is said, that he *was manifest in the Flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. which only denotes that the *Divinity* was made known, and did appear in the World in a *human Nature*. Elsewhere it is said, that *he took on him the Nature of Man*, Heb. ii. 16. which only denotes that the *Divinity* did assume the *human Nature* to it, and was personally united with it. So here *the Word was made Flesh*; *that is*, *the Word* was made *one* with the Flesh, by assuming the *human Nature* into a *personal* Union with itself.

Having thus explain'd to you the Sense and Meaning of the Words, I shall now conclude this Argument with *three* or *four* short Inferences from the Whole.

1. From hence we may infer the *eternal Divinity* of our *blessed Saviour*, even from this *great* Name *The Word*, that is here attributed to him. For since it is so apparent that this Phrase is a *Term of Art* derived from the *Schools* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and since by it they did all so generally understand a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*; it must necessarily follow, that the *Holy Ghost*, deriving it from them, and applying it to our *blessed Saviour*, must use it to the *same* Sense; for otherwise He were better never to have used it at all, because by discoursing in the *same* Language with them, he will give us *just* Occasion to think that he means the *same* Thing, namely, that *Christ*, whom he calls *the Word*, is a *Divine* Person subsisting from all *Eternity*; which if he doth not mean by using that

that Term, he will almoſt neceſſarily betray us into a *falſe* Belief concerning our *Saviour*. As, to inſtance briefly in a Caſe of another Nature: Our *Saviour* in his Sermons doth frequently preſs us to *Meekneſs* and *Patience*, *Humility* and *Charity*, all which are *Terms* frequently uſed long before in the *moral Philoſophy* both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by which they ſignify ſuch and ſuch *particular* Virtues. Since therefore our *Saviour* doth uſe the *ſame* Terms with them, we have *juſt* Reaſon to conclude that he means the *ſame* Virtues by them; and ſhould he mean any thing elſe, his very uſing of theſe Terms would neceſſarily impoſe upon us a *falſe* Senſe of his Meaning; for how ſhould we underſtand his Meaning but by his Words, and how ſhould we underſtand his Words but by the *common* Import and Signification of them? And can we imagine that the *Spirit of Truth* would have ever deſcribed our *Saviour* by a *Term* that was ſo generally uſed to ſignify a *Divine Perſon* ſubſiſting from all *Eternity*, and uſed it *too*, as he doth, without any Reſtraint or Limitation; nay, and ſo ſeemingly at leaſt to the *ſame* Purpoſe, as he doth in the *three firſt Verſes* of this Chapter, where he deſcribes the *Divine Nature* and *Operations* of *Chriſt the Word*, in the ſame Terms in which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to deſcribe the *Divinity* of their ΛΟΓΟΣ: Can we imagine, I ſay, that the *Holy Spirit* would have done thus, had he known *Chriſt* to be nothing but a *mere* Man that never was before he was born of his Mother? Far be it from us to charge that *bleſſed Spirit* with impoſing ſuch a Deluſion upon Mankind.

2. Hence I infer the *astonishing* Love of our *blessed Saviour* in condescending so low as to be made *Flesh* for us, and assume our Nature. For what he was before he took our Nature, you have heard already: He was no *less* than the *eternal Word of the Father*, in whose Bosom he enjoyed the *supremest* Degree of Bliss and Happiness, being crowned with Glory, and encircled about with the *essential* Rays of the *Divinity*. And yet such was his Love to *poor* Mortals, so *infinite* was his Zeal and Concern for our Happiness, that, seeing the Misery we were plunged into, he could not rest, no not in the *blessed* Arms of his Father, but strips himself of all his Majesty and Bliss, and comes down among us, and assumes our Nature, to save and rescue us, and invite and lead us to those *Heavenly* Mansions from whence he descended to us. Lord, what a *Prodigy* of Love was here, as doth not only *puzzle* my Conceit, but *out-reach* my Wonder and Admiration! For when I seriously consider it, though it be a Blessing beyond all my Hopes, and such as I could never have had the Impudence to desire; yet it fills my Mind with an *awful* Horror to think, that there was a Time when the *great* God was here upon the Earth in my Form and Nature, and conversed familiarly with such *mortal* Wights as myself, and for my sake, and such *poor* Worms as I, patiently underwent the *common* Infirmities of Men, and willingly exposed himself to the Contempt and Scorn of a *malevolent* World, and the Malice and Cruelty of those *barbarous* Men to whom he gave Being, and could with the Breath of his

his Noſtrils have ſcattered into *Atoms*; and all this in *mere* Compaſſion to a Company of *apoſtatized* Natures, who had ſo highly deſerved to be thrown from his Care and Mercy *for ever*. O my Soul, how am I aſtoniſhed at this *Miracle* of Love! Methinks, when I conſider it, I am looking down from a *ſtupendous* Precipice, whoſe Height fills me with a *trembling* Horror, and even overſetting Reaſon.

3. From hence I refer what *mighty* Obligations we have *for ever* to love and ſerve our *bleſſed Redeemer*. If our Hearts are capable of being warmed into *any* Degree of Affection, ſure 'tis impoſſible but we muſt be affected at ſuch an *unheard-of* Inſtance of Love. For the *Son of God* to leave his Father's Boſom, where he was infinitely more *happy* than we can expreſs and think of, and diſguiſe himſelf in *mortal* Fleſh, and become a *Man* of *Sorrows*, that he might make me a Man of *endleſs* Joys: Can my Heart hold when I think of this? Is it poſſible I ſhould reflect upon ſuch a *prodigious* Inſtance of Affection without being wrapt into an *Ecſtaſy* of Love! *Bleſſed Jeſus*, what *barbarous* Hearts do we carry about with us, that will not melt before the Flames of thy Love! Flames that are ſufficient to kindle *Seraphims*, and to fill all *reaſonable* Breaſts with *burning* Affections towards thee! For how is it poſſible that any *Man*, I had almoſt ſaid, that any *Devil* ſhould be ſo *diſingenuous* and *ill-natured*, as not to be affected with ſuch *ſtupendous* Kindneſs! When we ſee a Child ſlight his *careful* and *indulgent* Parents, we are ready to account him an *unnatural* Monſter;

when we ſee a Man neglect his Friend, or diſregard his Benefactor, we preſently call him *baſe* and *ungrateful*; nay, when we ſee one abuſe a *poor brute* Creature that fawns upon him, and expreſſes its Kindneſs to him, we look upon it as an *undoubted* Sign of a very *hard* Heart, and an *ill* Nature: What Term then can we find in all *the World of Words*, that is *odious* enough to expreſs our Diſaffection to our *bleſſed Redeemer*, to whom we are ſo infinitely obliged? *Baſe*, *Diſingenuous*, *Ill-natured*, and *Ungrateful*, are all too ſoft; 'tis ſomething beyond *barbarous* and *deviliſh*. For one would think that neither the moſt *inhuman Canibal* on *Earth*, nor the *blackeſt Devil* in *Hell*, could ever be guilty of ſo *foul* a Crime, which had ſomething in it *too monſtrous* for any Words to expreſs. Well therefore may the *Heavens* be aſtoniſhed, and the *Earth* tremble, and all the Creation of *God* ſtand amazed at us, to ſee how *inſenſible* we are of this moſt *raviſhing* and *endearing* Love! Well may we be amazed at ourſelves, and wonder at our own Stupidity, to think that the *Son of God* ſhould be ſo *kind* as to come down from *Heaven* to viſit us, to leave the Habitation of his Glory, and ſhroud his *Divinity* in *mortal* Fleſh, and make himſelf a *miſerable* Wight, merely that he might make us *happy*, and advance us to that Glory and Bliſs which for our ſakes he willingly abandoned; and yet that we are no more touched and affected with it, than with the moſt *indifferent* Thing in the World! *Bleſſed God*, what are we made of! What kind of Souls do we carry about with us, that

that no Kindneſs will oblige us; no, not the moſt *endearing* that ever was known or heard of! Doubtleſs, ſhould any Man have ſhewn us but half this Kindneſs, ſhould a *Friend* but offer to die for us, or a *Prince* to deſcend from his Throne, and put himſelf into the State of a *Beggar*, to enrich and advance us in the World, we ſhould have thought ourſelves bound to him as long as we lived; and ſhould we have thought any Services too much, any Requitals too *dear* for him, we ſhould have been looked upon as *Monſters* of Ingratitude, as the Reproaches and Scandals of *human* Nature, and been hiſſed out of all Society for a Company of *infamous* Villains, *unworthy* of the *leaſt* Reſpect or Favour from Mankind. But for a *Friend* to die, or a *Prince* to become a *Beggar* for our Sakes, alas! what *poor inconſiderable* Things are they, compared with the Condeſcenſions of the *Son of God*, who humbled himſelf much *lower* in becoming a Man, than the moſt *glorious* Angel in *Heaven* could have done in aſſuming the Nature of a Worm. And can we be ſo *inhuman* as not to be moved by ſuch a Miracle of *condeſcending* Love! Is it the leſs, becauſe it is the Love of God, or doth it leſs deſerve our Requital? What Excuſe then can we make for our *wretched* Inſenſibility? *O ungrateful* that we are! with what Confidence can we ſhew our Heads among *reaſonable* Beings, after we have ſo barbarouſly ſlighted our *beſt* Friend, and behaved ourſelves ſo diſingenuouſly towards our *greateſt* Benefactor? How can we pretend to any thing that is *modeſt* or *ingenuous*, *tender* or *apprehenſive*,

in *human* Nature, when nothing will oblige us, no not that *aſtoniſhing* Love that made the *Son of God* leave all his Glory, and become a *poor miſerable* Mortal for our Sakes? *O bleſſed Jeſus!* what do thy *holy Angels* think of us! how do thy *bleſſed Saints* reſent our Unkindneſs towards thee! yea, how juſtly will the Devils themſelves reproach and upbraid our Baſeneſs, who, *bad* as they are, were never ſo much Devils yet as to ſpurn the Love of a Redeemer, coming down from *Heaven* to die and ſuffer for their Sakes! Wherefore, as we would not be hiſſed at by all the *reaſonable* World, and become Spectacles of Horror to *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, let us endeavour to affect ourſelves with the Love of our *Redeemer*, and to inflame *our own* Souls with the Senſe of his Kindneſs, who hath done ſuch *mighty* Things to endear and oblige us.

4. From hence I infer what *monſtrous* Diſingenuity it would be in us to think much of *parting* with any thing, or *doing* any thing for the Sake of *Chriſt*, who for our Sakes parted with his Father's Boſom, and all thoſe *infinite* Delights which he there enjoyed, and united himſelf to our *miſerable* Nature, that he might make us *good* and *happy* for ever. And now, after all this, with what Conſcience, or Modeſty, can we grudge to do any thing which he ſhall require at our Hands? Should he command me to deſcend into the *loweſt* Form of Beings, and to become the moſt *wretched* and *contemptible* of all Animals, could I be ſuch a *Caitif* as to deny him, who deſcended much *lower* for the Sake of me? Should

ſhould he remand me back into *Non-entity*, and bid me ceaſe to be *for ever*; alas! the Diſtance is nothing ſo *great* between me and *nothing*, as it was betwixt *him* and that *human Nature* which he aſſumed for my Sake. Should he require me to die for him under all thoſe *lingering* and *exquiſite* Tortures which the *bleſſed Martyrs* ſuffered for his Name, what Proportion were there between what he requires of me, and what he hath done for me! He only requires that I ſhould paſs through *Death* to *Heaven* for him, but he came from *Heaven* to paſs through *Death* for me; ſo that for his Sake I ſhould only put *off* a *wretched* Garment of Fleſh, that I may be enrobed with Glory and Immortality; but for my Sake he put *off* his Robes of Glory and Majeſty, that he might wear my *frail* and *mortal* Fleſh, and therein reconcile me to *God*, and make me everlaſtingly *happy*: And when I may advance myſelf into an Equality with *Angels*, by ſuffering the Agonies of a *miſerable* Death for him, ſhall I refuſe, or think much of it, when he who was *equal with God* in Glory and Happineſs, was ſo ready to be born a *wretched miſerable* Man for me? Should he require me to give my Subſtance to the *Poor*, and leave myſelf *deſtitute* of all Supplies and Comforts, could I deny ſo *poor* a Requeſt to *him*, who forſook a *Heaven* of *infinite* Pleaſures for my Sake, and expoſed himſelf *naked* to the Mercy of a *wretched*, *wicked*, and *ill-natured* World, from whom he could expect nothing but the moſt *barbarous* Contempt and Cruelty? Sure, one would think it were impoſſible for any

reasonable Being to deny such *poor*, such *inconsiderable Boons*, to such a *great* and *deserving* Benefactor! and yet these are much more than what he ordinarily requires at our Hands. For that which he ordinarily requires of us, is, that we would forsake those *Vices* which are as *injurious* to *us*, as they are *hateful* to *him*, and which are therefore *hateful* to him, because they are our Enemies; and that we would practise those *Virtues* in which the Perfection and Happiness of our Nature is involved, and which we can no more be *happy* without, than we can *be* without Being. And can I think much to part with those Lusts for his Sake, which are my Shame and Infelicities, who never grudged to part with *Heaven* for *mine?* Can they be as *dear* to me, as his Father's Bosom was to him? And yet he left *that* for Love of *me*; and shall not I leave *these* for Love of him? Methinks, if we will not part with them for *our own* Sakes, as being *destructive* to our Peace and Happiness; yet, had we the *least* Spark of Ingenuity in us, we should gladly part with them for the Sake of our *Saviour*, who for *ours* was so ready to part with all that was *dear* to him. Can we be such Wretches as to refuse to serve him, when he requires nothing of us but what we ara obliged to by *our own* Interest? Are we so *lost* to all that is *ingenuous* and *modest*, that we will not obey *him*, when he only requires us to be kind to *ourselves? O wretched* Mortals! doth his coming down from *Heaven* to save you, deserve this *barbarous* Treatment at your Hands, that to spite *him* you should injure *yourselves*,

yourſelves, and wound his Authority through *your own* Sides? Had he been wholly *indifferent* to you, it had been very *unreaſonable* to reject his Service, when it altogether conſiſts in ſerving yourſelves; but to diſobey ſo *dear* a Friend, to whom we are obliged by ſuch *ſtupendous* Favours, when he enjoyns us nothing but the Means of *our own* Happineſs, is ſuch a Piece of *monſtrous* and *unnatural* Baſeneſs, as the *Devil* himſelf can hardly parallel. *O unkind* that we are! that we will not be *good* to ourſelves for our Saviour's Sake, and that when he conjures us to it, as he doth, even by all the Love that we owe him! For ſo *John* xiv. 15. *If ye love me*, ſaith he, *keep my Commandments: Conſider what mighty Things I have done for you; how I left my Throne in Heaven for your Sakes, and became a miſerable mortal Man: And now that I am going from you, and am offering up my Life to redeem you, if ever I have merited any Love at your Hands, expreſs it in keeping my Commandments. It is no great Matter that I require of you; it is only that you would be kind to yourſelves, that you would let Miſery alone, and endeavour to be as happy as Heaven can make you. This is all the Requital that I expect at your Hands, that you would be as good and happy as I would have you; and this which is the Sum of all my Commands, I conjure you ſtrictly to obſerve, even by all the Love that you owe me. O bleſſed Jeſus*, one would have thought thou hadſt been requiring ſome *mighty* Trial of our Love to thee, that we ſhould do ſome *great* Thing for thee, to which

which nothing could prompt us but only our Gratitude and Kindness: But when thou only requirest us to express our Love to thee, in doing that which is the *highest* Expression of our Love to *ourselves*, can we be so *disingenuous* as not to do that for *thy* Sake, to whom we are so infinitely obliged, which we are bound to do for *our own* Sakes, as well as thine?

5. And lastly, Hence I infer what a *glorious* thing it is to do *Good*, since the *Son of God*, having so great an Opportunity of doing *Good* to the World, thought it worth his while to come down from *Heaven*, and assume our Natures, and undergo our Miseries, as if he esteemed it more *glorious* and *becoming* the Majesty and Divinity of his Person to dwell upon Earth with *poor miserable* Mortals, among whom he might do the *greatest Good*, than to sit *above* upon the Throne of *Heaven*, and receive the most *humble* Adorations of *Angels*; for it was only for an Opportunity of doing the *greatest Good*, that he exchanged the Glory and Happiness of *Heaven*, chusing rather to become a *miserable* Man to make others *good* and *happy*, than to continue among those *infinite* Delights with which the *heavenly State* abounds. What a most *glorious* thing then is it to do *Good?* when our most *wise Redeemer* chose it before *Heaven* itself; when he thought it more *elegible* to come down upon Earth and make us *happy*, than to dwell in the Bosom of his Father, and shine in *Heaven* with the Brightness and Glory of his Divinity. And if there be nothing in *Heaven* so *glorious* as doing *Good*, what is there upon

Earth

Earth that may be compared unto it? What *dim*, what *ſullied* things are all the *Pomps* and *Splendors* of this World compared with the Glory of doing *Good* to *others*, when *God* preferred it before *Heaven* itſelf! To conquer Kingdoms, to lead the World in Triumph after us, how *mean* and *inconſiderable* are they compar'd with that Glory which the *Son of God* forſook, merely to do *Good* to the World! A thing which he eſteemed ſo *great* and *illuſtrious*, that he did not only leave *Heaven* for it, but ſcorned and deſpiſed the Kingdoms of the *Earth*, finding nothing *below* that was worthy of him, but only to go about doing *Good!* For this was his *conſtant* Employment, as you may ſee, *Acts* x. 21. And now is it *poſſible*, that after this *great* Example, we ſhould think Beneficence a *cheap* or *vulgar* thing? Can we think it a Diſhonour to ſtoop to the *meaneſt* Offices, whereby we may ſerve the *Souls* or *Bodies* of our Brethren, when the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven*, and veiled his Glory in *mortal* Fleſh for no other End but to do *Good! O fooliſh* Creatures that we are! Did we but underſtand and conſider what a *magnificent* thing it is to ſupply the Neceſſities of Men, and contribute to their Happineſs, we ſhould, doubtleſs, embrace it as our *greateſt* Preferment, and think ourſelves bound to bleſs God *for ever*, for furniſhing us with Occaſions of doing *Good*; that he doth deem us worthy of ſuch an *illuſtrious* Employment, to have ſome Share with himſelf in the Glory of it; that he will vouchſafe to us an Opportunity to *honour* and *magnify* ourſelves by acting this *Divine*, this *Godlike*, Part in the World.

World. Never then let us think that we diſhonour ourſelves, tho' we ſtoop *never* ſo low, when it is to do *Good* ; no, though it be to *viſit* a Beggar, to *dreſs* the Sores of a *poor Lazarus*, to *inſtruct*, or *comfort*, the *meaneſt* Wretch in all thy Neighbourhood. For now thou acteſt the Part of *God*, in doing the moſt *glorious* thing in all the World ; a thing for which the *greateſt* Princes may envy thee, and the *bleſſed God* for ever applaud thee ! Now thou art doing that which the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven* to do, and which he thought more worthy of his Choice, than to reign over *Angels* in *Heaven :* So that either we muſt ſay, That he was *unwiſe* for preferring it before *Heaven*, or elſe we muſt acknowledge, That we are infinitely *fooliſh* in preferring any thing in the World before it.

II. I now proceed to the *ſecond* Propoſition, *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.* For that theſe *latter* Words [*full of Grace and Truth*] belong to the *former*, [And dwelt among us] you may plainly ſee by the *Parentheſis* in your Bible, by which they are interrupted and broken off from one another. In the Explication of theſe Words, I ſhall do theſe *two* Things :

1. Enquire what is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us.*

2. What we are to underſtand by his being *full of Grace and Truth.*

1. What is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us?* In the *Greek* it is ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν ; that is, he pitched his Tabernacle among us ; which

which seems plainly to refer to God's Dwelling in the Tabernacle under the *Mosaic Law*. For the *Greek* Word σκηνόω comes immediately from the *Hebrew Shacan*, and differs from it only by the *Greek* Termination; and from *Shacan* comes the Word *Shechinah*, by which the *Hebrews* were wont to express God's *glorious* Presence upon Earth, and especially his Habitation in the *holy Tabernacle* between the *two Cherubims*, where he is said to dwell, 1 *Sam.* iv. 4. and 2 *Sam.* vi. 2. because from thence *God* was wont to speak, and discover himself by a *visible* Brightness and Glory: And accordingly this Presence, or Habitation of *God*, is called in the *Greek* δόξα, and ἐπιφάνεια, *Glory* and *Appearing*. Thus, *Numb.* xvi. 19. it is said, That when the *Congregation* drew near to the Tabernacle, the *Glory of the Lord appeared* unto them; and *Ver.* 42. it is said, That *a Cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the Glory of the Lord appeared*. So when *the Glory is said to be departed from Israel*, 1 Sam. iv. 21. it is plain, that by that *Glory* is meant this *visible* Appearance of *God* in a *glorious* Brightness from between the Cherubims. So *Rev.* 21. when it has been said of the *New Jerusalem*, that it was σκηνὴ, *the Tabernacle of God with us*, Ver. 3. that being repeated again, *Ver.* 11. is said to *have the Glory of God* in it, and the *Glory of God* to enlighten it, *Ver.* 23. Now it seems most probable, that this glorious *Shechinah*, Presence, or Habitation of *God*, consisted in the Presence of Angels; who being the *Courtiers* of *Heaven*, where they appear, there *God* is said to be peculiarly present. And hence it is that the Well *Labi-*

roi,

roi, where the *Angel* appeared to *Hagar*, Gen. xvi. 7, 14. is by the *Jerusalem Targum*, stiled the Well, *ubi manifestatata illi fuit Præsentia Domini Majestatica, where the Presence of God in Majesty was manifested to her:* And that *visible Glory* which appeared from between the Cherubims, is called by the same Name, *viz.* the *Gloria Majestaticæ Presentiæ Domini, the Glory of the Majestatick Presence of God*; which is a *plain* Evidence that the *Jews* believed the *Majestatick* Presence of *God* to be nothing else but the Appearance of Angels. And of the same Mind was the *Author to the Hebrews*, Heb. ii. 2. *For the Law*, saith he, *was spoken by Angels*; and so St. *Stephen*, Acts vii. 53. *The Law was received by the Dispositiön of Angels*; and St. *Paul*, that *the Law was ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator*, Galat. iii. 19. Whereas *Exod.* xix. 11. compared with xx. *Ver.* 22. it is said, that *The Lord came down in the Sight of all the People, and talked with them*; that is, as you will there find, he spoke the Law to them. Which is a plain Evidence, that that *glorious* Descent of God's Presence upon *Mount Sinai*, where the Law was spoken, was in the Opinion of the *Author to the Hebrews*, nothing but the Presence of Angels; who when they were to represent the *Divine Presence*, were wont to appear in *bright* and *radiant* Bodies; and therefore where it is said in *Isaiah*'s Vision, *Isaiah* vi. 1. that *he saw the Lord sitting upon a Throne*, and that *his Train filled the Temple*; that is, his Train of Angels; and this Train of Angels our *Saviour* calls *the Glory of the Lord*,

John

John xii. 41. which is the same with the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence:* And therefore, perhaps, they are called *Angels of Light* in reference to that *lucid, shining, flaming* Appearance which they were wont to make: And in *Psalm* civ. 4. *God* is said *to make his Ministers a flaming Fire*; that is, when they are to make a visible Representation of his *Majestick Presence* to Mankind. But, besides this, *Isaiah* lxiii. 9. you have mention made of *the Angel of God's Presence which saved Israel*; which seems to denote the *Head* and *Chief* of those Angels, which by their *glorious* Appearances did represent *God* to Mankind. By which Angel the *Jews* did generally understand the *Messias*, or *eternal Word:* For so *Philo* *, speaking of God's committing the Care of his Flock to his *first-born* Son, *The Word*, tells us, *That this is that Angel whom God promised to send before the Camp of Israel, even the Angel of his Presence.* And so also *Rab. Menahem* upon the xivth of *Exod.* 19. tells us, that *the Angel which went before the Camp of Israel was Shechinah, the Presence, or Majesty of God, and that he is called the Angel, or Prince of the World, because the Government of the World is in his Hands.* And to the same Purpose *Moses*, the Son of *Neheman*, *Præterea Scriptum est*, saith he, *& Angelus faciei ejus salvos fecit ipsos*, &c. that is, *It is* written, *the Angel of his Presence shall save them*, viz. that Angel which is the Presence of God, of whom it is said, *My Presence shall go before thee, and I will cause thee to rest. Moreover*, saith he, *this is that Angel*

* De Agricul. p. 152.

Angel of whom the Prophets foretold, The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, the Angel of the Covenant whom ye desire; which both the antient *Jews* and *Christians* interpret to be the *Messias:* And *this*, saith he, *is He who governs the World, that brought the Children of* Israel *out of* Egypt, *and to whom the most high God communicates his own Name.* And this, without doubt, was he whom *God* calls *his Presence*, when he promised *Moses*, That *his Presence should go along with him*, Exod. xxxiii. 14. for this *Presence* is there said to be the *Angel of God*; both which put together, make him to be the Angel of God's Presence, *Exod.* xxiii. 20. And accordingly, instead of, *Say not before the Angel of the Lord*, Eccles. v. 6. the *Septuagint* renders it, *Say not before the Presence of God*, that is, before the *Angel of his Presence.* And since to this *Angel of his Presence*, God doth attribute not only his Prerogative of forgiving Sins, but also *his own* Name, as you may see he doth, *Exod.* xxiii. 21. it seems very probable, what not only the *Jews*, but many very *learned Christians* do assert, that it was no *created* Angel, but the *eternal Word*, or *Messias:* For, saith *God* to *Moses*, *Behold I send an Angel before thee*, &c. *beware of him, and obey his Voice*; *provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Transgressions for my Name is in him*; that is, my Name *Jehovah*, which is the *proper* and *incommunicable* Name of *God.* And accordingly you frequently read of an Angel that is called by the Name *Jehovah*, which I doubt not, was the same with this *Angel of God's Presence.* Thus

that

that Angel of the Lord which appeared to *Moſes* in the *burning Buſh*, is called by the Name *Jehovah*, and ſtiled, *the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*, Exod. iii. 2. comp. 4. 5. And one of thoſe Angels that appeared to *Abraham* in the *Plains of Mamre*, is called the *Lord*, and *the Judge of all the Earth*, Gen. xviii. 1, 25. So alſo he that ſtood on the Top of the Ladder in *Jacob*'s Viſion, is in *Gen.* xxviii. 13. called *the Lord God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac*; whereas in *Gen.* xxxi. 11. he is called *the Angel of the Lord*, and afterwards, *Ver.* 13. *the God of Bethel.* Which ſeems to me a plain Evidence, that that *Angel* of God was *God*, ſince both thoſe Titles were attributed to the ſame Perſon; and that he was alſo that very Angel of *his Preſence* whom *God* promiſed to ſend before the *Camp of Iſrael*, ſince in him it is apparent the Name of *God* was, *i. e.* the Name *Jehovah*. And it is very obſervable, that this very Angel, both *Philo* and the *Chaldee Paraphraſe* ſtile the *Word of God*, and therefore thoſe Words of God to *Joſhuae* Joſ. 1. 5. *As I was with Moſes, ſo I will be with thee*, the *Paraphraſe* renders thus; *As my Word was aſſiſting to Moſes, ſo it ſhall be aſſiſting to thee.* And it is the Obſervation of the *learned Maſius*, that generally where the *Hebrew Text* ſpeaks of *God*, either converſing with Men, or managing their Affairs, that *Paraphraſe*, inſtead of God, uſes this Phraſe, *the Word of God.* From whence it is evident, that it was the *received* Doctrine of the *Jews*, that *God* was always preſent with Mankind by his *eternal Word*; which is therefore the more

considerable, because it so exactly agrees with the Doctrine of the *Primitive Fathers*. For so *Tertullian*, *Christus semper egit in Dei Patris nomine; ipse ab initio conversatus est cum Patriarchis & Prophetis*. And in his Book against *Praxian* he tells us, *That from* Adam *to the Patriarchs and Prophets, Christ always descended to discourse with Men*; and *that that God who conversed upon Earth with Men, was no other than that eternal Word that was to be made Flesh*. And the same thing is strenuously asserted also by *Justin Martyr* in his Discourses with *Trypho the Jew*. Nor can I see any Reason why he should not be the *Angel of God's Presence*, since elsewhere he is expressly called the *Angel* of that Covenant by which *God* hath obliged himself to be present with his *Church* for ever, *Mal.* iii. 1. And the *New Testament* so often declares him to be the *Image*, and *Character*, and *Representative* of God; and himself tells *Philip* that he did so perfectly represent the Father, that *whosoever had seen him had seen the Father*, John xiv. 9. And if this be so, as it seems highly probable, that *The Word* was *the Angel of God's Presence*, that is, the *Chief*, or *Prince* of those Angels that represented *God* in the World, then it will follow that the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence* of God, consisted in a *glorious* and *visible* Appearance of *the Word*, with a Troop of *blessed* Angels attending him in *bright* and *luminous* Forms. And this I conceive was the *glorious Presence* of God which came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, and afterwards removed into the Tabernacle, and abode between the two Cherubims,

Cherubims. And this I am rather induced to believe, becauſe I find the Deſcent of God's Preſence upon *Mount Sinai*, is deſcribed in the ſame Manner as Chriſt's Coming to Judgment; for ſo *Mat.* xvi. 27. it is ſaid, that *he ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels*; and St. *Jude* tells us, that *he ſhall come with his Holy Myriads, or Ten Thouſands*, Ver. 14. for ſo it ought to be rendered: And the Lord in the ſame Manner is ſaid to come from *Sinai with his holy Ten Thouſands, or Myriads*; for ſo it is in the *Hebrew*, Deut. xxxiii. 2. And ſince they are both deſcribed in the ſame Manner, it ſeems to follow, that they were both the *ſame Majeſtick Preſence* of God, even the *eternal Word* aſſuming a *glorious* Form, and attended with *Myriads* of *bright* and *ſhining* Angels. And this ſame *Preſence* it was that was afterwards diſplayed in the Tabernacle, which was ſaid to be filled with the *Glory of the Lord*, which ſhone from between the Cherubims with a *bright* and *viſible* Splendor; that is, with the *illuſtrious* Appearances of the *eternal Word*, and thoſe *glorious* Angels that attended him. And upon *that* Mount, and in *that* Tabernacle, did this *bleſſed Word* repreſent his Father, even as the *Viceroy* doth the *Sovereign* Prince; for there in his Father's Perſon, and by his Authority, he gave forth his Laws and Oracles to the Seed of *Abraham*, and as the Vicegerent of the moſt *high God*, governed the Houſe of *Iſrael*, and diſtributed to them *Rewards* and *Puniſhments*, according as they behaved themſelves towards him: For upon all the *forenamed* Reaſons it ſeems highly probable, that

he was the Lord who spoke to *Moses*, and from between the Cherubims, and that thence delivered the Law to him. So that as he was the *Shechinah*, or *glorious Presence* of the most *high God* in the Tabernacle, he did there represent his Person by bearing his Authority, and ruling the House of *Israel*, as his *Substitute* and *Viceroy*.

And that the Words of my Text do refer to this *glorious* Appearance of *the Word* in the Tabernacle, and to his representing of the most *high God* there, is very evident, in that it is not only said that he tabernacled among them, which evidently alludes to his dwelling in the *old* Tabernacle; but that they saw *his Glory* too, which is a *plain* Allusion to that Glory of his which filled the Tabernacle. So that the Meaning of these Words, *He dwelt among us*, seems to be this; that as *Christ*, who is the *eternal Word*, was the *Shechinah*, *the Divine Presence*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, which in the Tabernacle, of *old* represented the most *High* to the *Jews*; so he also abode, or tabernacled in our Flesh, as the *Representative* of his Father to Mankind. In the Tabernacle of our Flesh, he display'd the Glory of his Father to us; he openly manifested and represented him to the World, even as of *old* he was wont to do in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For *The Word* to tabernacle among us, must necessarily signify more then barely to dwell, or live among us; for it must signify to dwell as the *Shechinah* in the Tabernacle, that is, as the most *glorious* Presence, or Representative of the most *high God*, as one that was vested with the *divine* Authority,

Authority, and that was the *Vicegerent* of the Father of all Things. So that, *He dwelt among us*, ſeems to ſignify the ſame with, He reign'd among us in his Father's Stead, as one who bore his Authority, and repreſented his Perſon, and to whom, for the future, we were to pay the *ſame* Homage and Reverence that we were bound to render to the moſt *High* himſelf, who under *himſelf* hath authorized him to be our Prince and Governor, to declare his Divine Will to us, and exact our Obedience thereunto, by *rewarding* and *puniſhing* us according to the Tenor of thoſe Laws which he hath eſtabliſhed in his *bleſſed Goſpel*; for this is plainly implied in his *Shechanizing* or *Tabernacling*, viz. his being the *glorious* Repreſentative of *God* in the World. He tabernacled among us, that is, he acted in God's Stead, as one that repreſented his Father; and this he did in our Fleſh in a far more *glorious* Manner than ever he did in the *Moſaic Tabernacle:* For in our Fleſh and Nature he tabernacled *full of Grace and Truth*; which brings me to the next Enquiry, *viz.*

2. What is here meant by his *dwelling among us full of Grace and Truth?* By theſe *two* Phraſes the Deſign of the *holy Penman* is, doubtleſs, to diſtinguiſh the Manner of his dwelling among *us*, from that of his dwelling among the *Jews* in the Tabernacle: For a little after he uſes the *ſame* Phraſes in Contradiſtinction to the Law of *Moſes: The Law*, ſaith he, *was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth by Jeſus Chriſt*, *v.* 17. *God, the eternal Word*, gave the Law to *Moſes*, and *Moſes* gave it to the People of *Iſrael*; but *Jeſus Chriſt*

that is, the *eternal Word incarnate*, gave not the Law, but *Grace and Truth*. So in the Text, *The Word incarnate*, or tabernacled in our Flesh, did *Shecanize*, or perform the Part of his Father's *supreme* Representative among us *full of Grace and Truth*; which implies something beyond what he did when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and there, as the *Viceroy* of *God*, reigned over the *House of Jacob*. That I may therefore more fully explain this Matter to you, I will briefly consider these *two* Phrases *apart*, and shew you in what Particulars they each of them distinguish his dwelling among *us*, from his dwelling in the *Mosaic Tabernacle*.

1. He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, which distinguishes his dwelling among *us* from that more *severe* and *rigorous* Manner in the *former* Tabernacle; and that in these following Particulars:

1*st*, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in respect of the *Sweetness* and *Obligingness* of his Behaviour, in Contradistinction to that more *dreadful* and terrible Manner of his Conversing with the *Jews*, when he tabernacled among them. The *Jews* being a most *stubborn* and *stiff-necked* Generation, (as they are often called in the *Old Testament*) the *eternal Word* thought fit to converse among them in such a way as was most *suitable* to their *Genius* and Temper, to break their Stubbornness with the Dread of his Power, and awe them with the Terror of his Majesty. And accordingly you find that when he came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, he was attended with a *loud sounding* Trumpet, with *Thunders* and *Lightenings*, with *Fire* and *Smoak*, and all the

the Equipage of a moſt *dreadful* Majeſty, ſuch as cauſed the Mountain and the People to tremble, *Exod.* xix. 16, 20. And afterwards it is ſaid, that the Glory in which he appeared, when the People ſaw him upon the Mount, was like a *devouring* Fire, in which *glorious* Appreance he afterwards removed iuto the *Tabernacle*, and there abode between the *Cherubims*, Exod. xl. 34, 35. And when in all this *dreadful* Majeſty he appeared unto them, they are kept at a *great* Diſtance from him, and were ſeverely forbid to approach him, leaſt he ſhould *break forth upon them, and deſtroy them*, *Exod.* xix. 24. And whenever they provoked him by their Murmurings and Rebellions, his Wrath broke forth like Lightening upon them, and conſumed the *ring-leading* Rebels, that by their Example the reſt might be warned to do no more wickedly. Thus in all his Converſes with them he clothed himſelf in a *formidable* Majeſty, to break and awe their *ſturdy* Spirits, and force their *ſtiff* Necks to yield to the Yoke of his *Sovereign* Authority. But when he aſſumed our Nature, and tabernacled among us in our Fleſh, he laid by that *aſtoniſhing* Majeſty that was wont to render him ſo dreadful to the *Iſraelites*, and put on all the Condeſcenſions and Sweetneſſes of a moſt *familiar* and *endearing* Converſation, and converſed amongſt Men in ſuch a *generous*, *friendly*, and *courteous* Manner, as was moſt apt to charm and enamour the World. He was free, without being *vain* or *trifling*; ſerious, without being *ſour* and *moroſe*; his Humour always *chearful* and *uniform*, and his Gravity

was equally distant from Morosenes and Vanity; and, in a Word, his Deportment was made up of all the Accomplishments that can command either Love or Honour. And though now and then he falls into high Expressions of Indignation, yet it was only against those base Fellows the *Pharisees*, who under a Pretence of being *Saints* and the *godly Party*, were *bloated* up with Pride and Arrogance, and *cankered* with Malice and *ill* Nature; for which they were so abominable in his Eyes, whose Temper was altogether so *loving* and *divine*, that he could not mention them without calling them *Hypocrites, and the Children of the Devil.* And if to all this you add his *profound Humility* and *Condescension*, his *Meekness* under Reproaches, and his *Constancy* and *Patience* under the *greatest* Sufferings; how much more *sweet*, *graceful*, and *charming*, was this, than when he appeared in such a *dreadful* and *astonishing* Majesty upon *Mount Sinai*, and in the Tabernacle of *Moses?* It is true, the *Innocency* and *Purity* of his Life, the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, and the many mighty Miracles that he wrought, could not but imprint an awful Majesty upon his Person; but yet it was a graceful Majesty, a Majesty full of Grace and Sweetness, and such as was much more *apt* to *endear*, than to *affright* Men. For, as for the *Virtue* of his Life, and the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, it could not but attract all those who had any Love and Esteem for Virtue and Goodness. And as for his Miracles, they were vastly *different* from those which he wrought in the Wilderness, which had *little* else in them but Matter

Matter of Terror and Aſtoniſhment; but theſe were all ſuch as did expreſs his Kindneſs to the World, and ſo were much more apt to *oblige*, than to *terrify* thoſe that beheld them: *For he went about doing Good, and healing all that were oppreſſed with the Devil*, Acts x. 38. *and healing all manner of Sickneſs, and all manner of Diſeaſes among the People*, Mat. iv. 23. So that in reſpect of the *Sweetneſs* and *Obligingneſs* of his Converſation, he tabernacled among us *full of Grace*, in Contradiſtinction to that *terrible* Majeſty in which he tabernacled among the *Jews*.

2*dly*, He tabernacled among us *full of Grace*, in regard of the *Sweetneſs* and *Gentleneſs* of his Laws, in Contradiſtinction to thoſe many *burthenſome* Precepts which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. It is apparent by the Hiſtory of that People, that they were obſtinately addicted to the Cuſtoms of *Egypt*, from whence they were brought, and of the *neighbouring* Nations round about them; and thence it was, that notwithſtanding thoſe *manifeſt* Diſcoveries that God had made of himſelf to them, and of his being the only *true God*, ſuch as one would have thought had been *ſufficient* to have convinced the moſt *obſtinate* Gainſayers; yet *ever* and *anon* we find them ſtarting aſide to the *idolatrous* Cuſtoms of the *Gentiles*, and revolting from that *God* who had ſo glorioufly manifeſted himſelf among them. The *Eternal Word* therefore, when he came to *tabernacle* among them, he gave them abundance of Laws, the Matter of which was in its *own* Nature perfectly *indifferent*, that by thoſe

thoſe, as by ſo many Bounds and Fences, he might keep them from breaking out of God's Incloſure into the *wild Common* of *Gentiliſm*; and ſuch were the *greateſt* Part of their *Ceremonial Laws*, ſome of which were inſtituted in Compliance with the more innocent Rites of the *Heathen*, and *others* in Oppoſition to thoſe which were purely *magical* and *idolatrous*. And hence it is that in the Law of their Ceremonies, there are ſo many Things enjoined them, of which we can give no *tolerable* Account, they being either innocent Cuſtoms derived from the *Heathens* in Compliance with the *Jews*, or Prohibitions of thoſe *magical* and *idolatrous* Cuſtoms in which the *Jews* had been educated in *Egypt*, and to which they were always very prone and inclinable; ſo that merely to comply with the *Jews* in what was innocent, and to reſtrain them in what was *hurtful* and *idolatrous*, the *Eternal Word* was fain to impoſe a *vaſt* Number of *poſitive Laws* upon them, which contained nothing but what was purely indifferent, and might have been done or undone without any Prejudice to the *eternal* Rules of Goodneſs. And accordingly, *Ezek.* xx. 24, 25. it is ſaid, that *becauſe their Eyes were after their Fathers Idols, therefore God gave them Statutes that were not good*; that is, had no *intrinſick* Goodneſs in them; and *Judgments whereby they ſhould not live.* And that *God* impoſed theſe Things, not as *good* in themſelves, but as *accommodated* to the *preſent* State and Temper of the *Iſraelites*, is evident from what the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſal.* li. 16. *Thou deſireſt not Sacrifice*;

Sacrifice; thou delightest not in Burnt-Offerings. Though it is evident he had a farther End in imposing very many of these *sacred* Rites, namely, to shadow out by them the Mysteries of the *Gospel*, and give them some *preludious* Hints of that *glorious* Kingdom of *Christ*, that was afterwards to be established in the World: But by this Means the *Jewish* Law was multiplied into so many Precepts, and those many of them so *expensive* and *burthensome*, that the *Apostle* calls it *a Yoke, which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear*, Acts xv. 10. and elsewhere, *a Yoke of Bondage*, Gal. v. 1. Thus while the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews*, his Laws were very *rigid* and *cumbersome*, being clogged with so *vast* a Number of *positives* Rites and Observances: But when he came to tabernacle in our Flesh, he abolished all these *numerous* Ceremonies, and imposed nothing upon the World but what is *sweet*, and *easy*, and *full of Grace*. And hence himself tells us, *Mat.* xi. 30. ὁ ζυγός μου χρηστός, *My Yoke is gracious*, (for so it is in the *Greek*) *and my Burthen is light*; for it imposes nothing upon us but what is most *agreeable* to our *rational* Natures, nothing but what we ourselves, if we were *wise* and *good*, should reckon ourselves obliged to, though he had never enjoined it. For all the Duty he requires of us results immediately from the Frame of our Natures, and the *unalterable* Relations we stand in to *God* and the World. For the Sum of all *Christian* Duty is contained in those *three* Generals, *to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present World*;

and

and theſe muſt neceſſarily oblige us ſo long as we carry *ſuch* Beings about us, and continue in *ſuch* Relations. Whilſt God is our God and Creator, we cannot be diſobliged from living *godly*; that is, from *honouring* and *loving* him, from *fearing* and *truſting* in him, from *ſerving* and *adoring* him; for unleſs we could deſtroy our Relation to him, and ceaſe to be his Creatures, the Dueneſs of theſe Acts of Homage and Worſhip from *us* to *him*, muſt neceſſarily abide *for ever*: Whilſt we continue to be *reaſonable* Animals, we cannot be freed from the Obligation of *Sobriety*, which conſiſts in governing our Paſſions and Appetites by our Reaſon; for till we can lay by our Reaſon, which is the *ſuperior* Principle of our Nature, and ſtep into *another* Form of Beings, it will be alwavs fit that our *inferior* Powers ſhould be ſubject to its Conduct and Government. Whilſt we continue in the *Society* of Men, and are Members of the Body of Mankind, we cannot be releaſed from the Ties of *Righteouſneſs*, which contains in it *Charity* and all other *ſociable Virtues*; and till we ceaſe to be related to Mankind, it can never ceaſe to be *reaſonable* for us to do what becomes our Relation, that is, to be *juſt*, *bening*, and *charitable* to *one another*. So that all that the *Word incarnate* hath enjoined us, is to do what we ourſelves muſt needs acknowledge is moſt *juſt* and *reaſonable*, and what we ſhould chuſe to do before any thing in the World, were we not prejudiced againſt it by our own *baſe* Luſts and *unreaſonable* Paſſions. So that in reſpect of thoſe *gracious* Laws he gave us whilſt he dwelt among us, he may well be ſaid to dwell among us *full of Grace*. 3*dly*,

3*dly*, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in reſpect of that *full* Pardon and Remiſſion which he hath granted to Sinners in his *Goſpel*, in Contradiſtinction to that *partial* and *incomplete* Pardon which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. For whilſt the *Eternal Word*, as his Father's Repreſentative, reigned over the Nation of *Iſrael*, he gave no *other* Pardon but *temporal*, by the Law of *Moſes*, which was the Rule and Inſtrument of his Government. And I am ſure that from the xxth of *Exod.* to the xxviith of *Deut.* in which Compaſs that whole Law is comprized, there is not the *leaſt* mention of any *other* Pardon or Forgiveneſs, allowed to Offenders, but only what reſpects their *temporal* Puniſhment: Nay, in *ſome* Caſes this was not allowed; as particularly, in the Caſes of *Blaſphemy*, *Idolatry*, and *Murther*, no, not though they heartily repented of it. For all that Pardon which the *Moſaick* Law allowed, was indulged to them upon their offering up *propitiatory Sacrifices*, which in theſe *exempted* Caſes were not allowed of; but yet the *Apoſtle* tells us of all theſe Sacrifices in general, that *the Blood of Bulls and of Goats could not take away Sin*, Heb. x. 4. that *they did ſanctify only to the purifying of the Fleſh* Heb. vii. 13. that *they could not make him that did the Service perfect as pertaining to the Conſcience*, Heb. ix. 9. that is, that they only releaſed Offenders from the Obligation to *civil* and *eccleſiaſtical* Puniſhments, but could by no means free them from the *eternal* Puniſhments of the *other* Life. Not that I make the *leaſt* doubt but that truly *penitent* Offenders were

were forgiven the *eternal* Punishment *then*, as well as *now*, and forgiven *too* for the Sake of *Jesus Christ*, the Lamb that was intentionally slain from the beginning of the World; but by what hath been said, it is plain they were not forgiven by virtue of that Law whereby the *Eternal Word* reigned over the House of *Israel*, but rather by virtue of that *Gospel* which was first preached to *Adam*, and afterwards to the *Patriarchs*; wherein *Christ*, the *Seed of the Woman*, and *the Seed of Abraham*, is promised, in whom all Nations of the Earth should be blessed. It is true, the Sacrifices of the *Law* were *typical* of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, and so consequently was that *temporal* Pardon obtained by them, *typical* of that *eternal* Pardon which we do obtain by the *great* Propitiation of our *Saviour*; for so the *Apostle* tells us, that *the Law had in it a shadow of good things to come.* Heb. x. 1. But we must not imagine that *eternal* Remission, which is the Effect of *Christ*'s *real* Sacrifice, could ever be obtained by those Sacrifices which were only the Shadows and Resemblances of it. So that *that* Remission of Sins which the *Eternal Word* gave whilst he tabernacled among the *Jews*, was nothing near so *perfect* and *complete* as that which he afterwards proclaimed in the Tabernacle of our Flesh, because it neither extended to all Kinds of Sins, nor yet to all Kinds of Punishments; it left *some* unforgiven, as to the Punishments of this Life, and it left *all* unforgiven as to the Punishments of the Life to come. But having pitched his Tabernacle in our Flesh, he did, by the *meritorious*

ritorious Sacrifice of himself, obtain of his Father this *publick* Act of Grace, this *free* Charter of Mercy for all Mankind, that whosoever would repent and amend, whatsoever Sins he is guilty of, whatsoever Punishments he is obliged to, he shall certainly be forgiven them all, and be as freely received into God's Grace and Favour, as if he never had offended him; for he is the Propitiation for the Sins of the World; *And by him* saith the Apostle, *all that believe are justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses.* Act xiii. 39. In this respect therefore the *Eternal Word* dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in that he proclaimed such a full and perfect Pardon of all Sins, and of all Punishments, to all that with a true Faith and hearty Repentance should turn unto him; and accordingly this Pardon is frequently called by the Name of *Grace*, or *of the Grace of God*, and *of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Acts xv. 11. Heb. xii. 15. and Rom. iii. 24.

4*thly*, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in respect of the *internal* Grace and Assistance, which he so abundantly afforded us above what he did to the *Jews* under the Law of *Moses* when he tabernacled among them. I make no Doubt but God in all Ages hath been always ready to assist good Men in their Duty. This the very *Heathens* themselves believed, that χωρὶς δαίμονος οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς, that *God* did concur with all good Men, and that no Man did ever arrive to any eminent Degree of Virtue without a *divine* Afflatus, or Assistance. And had the good Men among the *Jews* been ignorant of

of this, what ſhould move them to pray, as we find they often do, that *God* would *waſh* and *cleanſe*, and *quicken* and *ſtrengthen*, and *enliven* them? For ſo, in the *Book of the Pſalms*, you find *good David* very often praying, that *God would teach him his Commandments, and incline his Heart to keep them, and keep him back from preſumptuous Sin.* By which Prayers it is evident, they had *good* Encouragement to hope that *God* would be ready to concur with them, and to bleſs their *pious* Endeavours with the *internal* Aſſiſtance of his Grace and Spirit. And this Encouragement, I ſuppoſe, they might have partly from their *natural* Notions of *God*, which muſt needs ſuggeſt to them that He being infinitely *good*, as he is, will never be wanting to his Creatures in any thing that is *neceſſary* to the obtaining thoſe *noble* Ends for which he created them, and conſequently that he will be aſſiſtant to them in their Duty which is the Way to that End, and not to leave them to contend with Difficulties which are *inſuperable* to their *natural* Power and Ability; and partly from thoſe *general Evangelical* Promiſes which *God* made to them by the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, from whence they might fairly infer, that he who had promiſed to do ſo much for them, upon Condition they perſiſted in their Duty and Allegiance to him, would never be wanting on his Part to ſtrengthen and enable them to it. But I can by no Means allow, that they were encouraged to hope for any ſuch Aſſiſtance from any Promiſe of that Law which the *Eternal Word* gave them, when he tabernacled among them, and by which, in his

his Father's Stead, he ruled and governed them; and that both becauſe there is no ſuch Promiſe found in all that Law, and becauſe the *Apoſtle* tells us, that *the Law was weak through the Fleſh*, Rom. viii. 3. and calls it *the Miniſtration of Death written and engraven in Stones*, in Oppoſition to *the Miniſtration of the Spirit that is not written in Tables of Stone, but in fleſhly Tables of the Heart*, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8. compare with *ver.* 3. And *Gal.* iii. 13, 14. you find the *Apoſtle* oppoſes to the *Curſe of the Law*, the Bleſſing of *Abraham*; and the *Bleſſing of Abraham* he tells us is *the Promiſe of the Spirit through Faith*, that is by the *Goſpel*, And thus under the Law there was doubtleſs an *internal* Grace and Aſſiſtance vouchſafed to *good* Men, though not promiſed by it; yet after the *Eternal Word* forſook the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, and came to tabernacle in our Fleſh, it is evident that then he did more plentifully communicate this his Grace to the World than ever; for then the *Spirit* was ſaid to be ſhed upon us abundantly through *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; and in the 16th Verſe of this 1ſt of *John*, we are ſaid *of his Fulneſs to receive* χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, *Grace upon Grace*, that is, Grace heaped upon Grace, and a *vaſt overflowing* Abundance; according to that of *Theognis* δοίης τ' ἀντ' ἀνιῶν ἀνίας, that is, thou giveſt me Calamities upon Calamities. So that unleſs we will ourſelves, it is now *impoſſible* we ſhould fall ſhort either of our Duty, or the *bleſſed* Reward of it, ſince our *Saviour* is become ſuch an *overflowing* Fountain of Grace to us, and hath promiſed to communicate it to us in ſuch *plentiful* Effuſions if we will ſincerely aſk, and

honeſtly endeavour after it; and therefore in this Reſpect alſo he may well be ſaid *to dwell among us full of Grace*, in that while he dwelt among us he obtained for, and promiſed to us ſuch an *accumulated* Plenty of *inward* Grace and Aſſiſtance; to encourage and enable us to do his Commandments.

5*thly*, He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in Reſpect of the Vaſtneſs of the Recompence which he promiſed to us, and which *infinitely* exceeds whatſoever he promiſed when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. For when the *eternal Word* reigned over *Iſrael* as the *Vice-roy* and Subſtitute of his Father, he only acted the Part of their *Civil* Sovereign or Governor; which Part he continued till they choſe *another* King, and then he reſigned his Title to the *ſucceeding* Heirs of *David*. And accordingly we find, that when the *Iſraelites* firſt deſired a King of *Samuel*, God bids him hearken to their Cry: *For*, ſaith he, *they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them*. Sam. viii. 7. Which is a *plain* Argument, that before he only acted as their *political* Prince, in that he interprets their deſiring *another* King, to be a rejecting of him from reigning over them. For had he been no otherwiſe King over *Iſrael*, than as he is over *other* Nations where the *true* Religion is owned and profeſſed, his Dominion might have fairly conſiſted with that of *another* King, or Sovereign; and it would have been no more a rejecting God's Rule for *Iſrael* to deſire a King, than it is for *France*, or *Spain*, or *England*. For it is plain the *Iſraelites* did not reject God's

divine

divine Dominion, which he claims over the World as the *Omnipotent* Creator of all Things; for then their Desire of a King had been *Idolatry*, and the Kings whom they desired had been *Idols*, or *false* Gods. It is plain therefore, that it was his *political Dominion* only which they rejected, by desiring *another* King to reign in his stead, which he interprets as their Intention to rob and divest him of that *Civil Authority* which till then he had claimed and exercised among them. So that the *plain* Sense of their Desire was this; *God* shall no longer be our *Civil Sovereign*, but for the *future* we are resolved to have a King from among *ourselves*, even as *other* Nations round about us, whom we will invest with the same *Civil Authority* which hitherto he hath challenged and exercised among us. *God the Eternal Word* therefore being their *Civil Prince*, or Ruler, as such he gave them the *Mosaick* Law, which he only designed to be the Rule, or Instrument of his *Civil* Government and Dominion; which is the Reason why in *that* Law he only promised *Civil* or *Temporal* Blessings, because it was only a Law of *Civil* Government, and as such could design no further than the *Civil* or *Temporal* Happiness of those who were to be ruled and governed by it. And accordingly, if you peruse the Promises of that Law, you will find that they all consist of *outward* and *temporal* Blessings; such as *Health* of Body, and *Victory* over their Enemies, *Peace* among themselves, and with their *neighbouring* Nations, *Plenty* of Bread, and the *Conveniencies* of Life, and *Success* and *Prosperity* in all their Affairs; and

therefore the *Author to the Hebrews* calls the *Gospel*, the bringing in of a *better Hope*, and upon this Account opposes it to the Law of *Moses*, Heb. vii. 19; which plainly implies, that *that* Law brought in no *better Hope* than that of a *temporal* Happiness; and those Words of the *Apostle*, Gal. iii. 12. *The Law is not of Faith; but the Man that doth them shall live in them*, do plainly seem to imply this Sense. The Law proposing only *present* and *sensible* Blessings to such as do it, such as that *Thou shalt live a happy and prosperous Life in this World*, doth not require Faith properly so called, which is *the Evidence of things not seen*; that is of the *invisible* Blessings of the *other* Life; and *ver.* 21. he plainly asserts, that if there had been any *other* Law besides the *Gospel* that could have *given* that *promised* Life, *Righteousness would have been by that Law*, and therefore since, as he asserts, Righteousness was by no other Law but the *Gospel*, it follows, that no other *Law*, no, not that of *Moses*, could give, or promise, *Life eternal.* Not that I make the *least* Doubt, but *good* Men under the Law of *Moses*, did firmly believe a *future* Happiness; for this the very *Heathens* themselves had very *great* Hopes and Expectations of, though they never had so much Reason as the *Jews* to induce them to believe: For, besides all these *weighty* Arguments which were *common* to them with the *Heathens*, they had those *general evangelical* Promises which *God* made to the *Patriarchs* of *being their God*, and *their exceeding great Reward*; the Histories of the Translations of *Enoch*

Enoch and *Elijah*, and of *ſundry* moſt *eminent* Examples of God's *exceeding* Love to Goodneſs and *good* Men; from whence they might eaſily infer, that ſure he had *better* Rewards in Store for them than any of the *tranſitory* Bleſſings of this Life, eſpecially when they ſaw how many good Men were deprived of theſe, and left *naked* and *deſtitute* of all worldly Comforts: Beſides all which, in every Age they had Prophets that were divinely inſpired, and who, among all the Secrets that were revealed to them, cannot be ſuppoſed to have been wholly unacquainted with the *typical* Meaning of their Ceremonies and Polity, which, among other Things, preſignified the *glorious* Recompences of the Life to come. But however they came by it, I think it is very apparent from ſundry Paſſages in the *Book of Pſalms*, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*, that they were far from being Strangers to the Doctrine of a *bleſſed* Immortality *hereafter*; though I think it is very apparent from what hath been ſaid, that they did not derive their Belief of this Doctrine from any expreſs Promiſe of their Law. But yet it is very apparent, that though they were not altogether unacquainted with it, yet it was never ſo clearly diſcovered to them by the *eternal Word*, as it was afterwards to *us* by the *Word incarnate*, ſince, as the *Apoſtle* tells us, *He brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Goſpel:* For therein he hath moſt clearly promiſed it to us; and as far as human Language can expreſs, explained and unfolded its Nature; and by his own Reſurrection and Aſcenſion into *Heaven*, hath given us a *clear*

and *viſible* Demonſtration of its Truth and Reality; ſo that now the Exiſtence of it is become as certain to us, as it is poſſible for a *Matter of Fact* to be; and we cannot be more infallibly aſſured of it than we are, unleſs we had been perſonally in *Heaven*, and had there ſurveyed its Glories with our own Eyes. Well therefore may He be ſaid to have dwelt among us *full of Grace*, ſince he was graciouſly pleaſed to make us ſuch expreſs Promiſes of future Happineſs, and give us ſuch ample Aſſurance of its Reality and Exiſtence. And ſo I have done with the firſt Note of Diſtinction between Chriſt's dwelling among *us*, and his dwelling in the *Moſaic Tabernacle:* He dwelt among us *full of Grace.*

2. The *other* Character by which his dwelling among *us* is diſtinguiſhed from his dwelling in the *Moſaick Tabernacle*, is this, that he dwelt among us *full of Truth.* It is *plain* that *Truth* here is not to be underſtood as oppoſed to *Falſhood*, becauſe in that Senſe it is no Note of Diſtinction between theſe *two* Dwellings, or Tabernaclings of *Chriſt*, unleſs we ſuppoſe that he did falſly dwell, or act, and repreſent *God in* the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, which would be to blaſpheme his Truth and Veracity. *Truth* therefore muſt here be underſtood as oppoſed to *Obſcurity* and *Shadow*, and ſo muſt denote *Clearneſs* and *Reality*, as it very commonly doth. As when we ſay a Picture is not a *true* Man, we do not charge the Picture with a Lie. If it could ſpeak indeed, and ſhould call itſelf a Man, we ſhould then ſay, it were a *lying* Picture for pretending to be what it is not, being

being only a *ſilent* Reſemblance of him. Thus when the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *He dwelt among us as full of Truth*, and thereby diſtinguiſhes his tabernacling among *us*, from the manner of his dwelling among the *Jews*, it is not ſo to be underſtood as if he had dwelt among them in a *falſe*, or *lying* Manner, or that *that* Repreſentation which he made to them of *God* and *divine* Things were *falſe* and *impoſturous*; no, God forbid: But thus, whereas when he inhabited the Tabernacle, he was *full* of *Hieroglyphicks*, or *myſtical* Repreſentations, which tho' they were *true* Pictures, or Shadows of *divine* Things, yet have not the Truth and Reality of the things themſelves in them, and conſequently would be Lyes and Cheats, ſhould they pretend to be what they only repreſent, but now he is come to dwell among us, he is *full* of the Things themſelves, of thoſe *Realities* which formerly he only gave us the *Types* and *Shadows* of; now he hath removed all that Scene of Pictures and *myſtical* Repreſentations, and brought the Things themſelves upon the *Stage*, and expoſed them *naked* to the View of the World. So that *now* he doth not entertain *us*, as *heretofore* he did the *Jews*, with *Emblems* and *Shadows*, but with Truth, and the *real* Subſtances of Things. And thus the Word is very frequently taken in the *New Teſtament:* Thus *Heb.* viii. 2. the *Chriſtian Church* is called *the true Tabernacle* in Contradiſtinction to the *Tabernacle of Moſes*; not as if *that* were a *falſe* Tabernacle, but a *typical* one, it being deſigned only as a Shadow of the *Chriſtian Church*, which is the *true* Reality

and Subſtance which was pictured and repreſented in it; for ſo the *Apoſtle* himſelf explains it, *Heb.* ix. 24. *For Chriſt*, ſaith he, *is not entered into the holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven itſelf:* From whence it is plain, that therefore thoſe *holy Places* are oppoſed to *true Places*, becauſe they were only Figures, or *myſtical* Repreſentations of ſomething that is *real* and *ſubſtantial.* So, *Dan.* vii. 16. when *Daniel* deſired to know the Truth of that *Prophetick Scene*, it is ſaid, that *One ſtood by, and made him know the Interpretation of the Things*; that is, what was the Reality and Subſtance that was repreſented in thoſe Types and Figures. So here, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*; that is, when he dwelt among us he was *full* of the *Subſtance* and *Reality* of thoſe Things, which before he was wont to repreſent by *obſcure Emblems* and *Shadows*; now he preſents to us the Things themſelves, and not the *myſtical* Types and Figures of them, as formerly he was wont to do. For I think it is very evident, that the *whole* Model of the *Jewiſh Polity* was purpoſely contrived to be an *Emblem* and Repreſentation of the *Goſpel*, and that the *main* Reaſon of thoſe *numerous* Rites and Ceremonies, was to delineate and ſhadow out the *glorious* Myſteries of *Chriſtianity:* For the *Apoſtle* plainly tells us, that they were all a *Shadow of Things to come*, and that *the Body*, or Subſtance of that Shadow, *was Jeſus Chriſt.* Col. ii. 17. And the Author to the *Hebrews* calls them *the Patterns of the Things in Heaven*, or the *heavenly*

venly Things; by which it is plain he means *Chriſt*, or the Subjects of the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, ſince he tells us, that as it was *neceſſary* that thoſe Patterns ſhould be purified with Blood, ſo it was *neceſſary* that thoſe *heavenly* Things repreſented by them, ſhould be purified by a *better Sacrifice*. Heb. ix. 23. And what other *heavenly* Things are there but only *Chriſtians* that are purified with this *better Sacrifice* of Chriſt? And in another Place the ſame Author tells us, that *the Law hath in it a Shadow of good Things to come*. Heb. x. 1. And thus very frequently in the *New Teſtament*, the *ſacred* Rite of the *Moſaick Law* are declared to be Types and Shadows of the *Myſteries* of the *Goſpel*, as particularly in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, which is almoſt wholly ſpent upon this Argument, and this the *Jews* themſelves ſeem to be acquainted with long before the Publication of the *Goſpel:* For ſo the moſt antient *Jews* looked upon the Temple as a Type and Figure of the *heavenly* State; and *Philo* the *Jew*, in his *Allegories of the Law*, and almoſt in all his *other* Writings, makes the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Moſaick* Law to be Types and Figures of ſome *Divine* or *Moral* Truth, and particularly the *High Prieſt*, to be an *Emblem* of the *Eternal Word*, and his Crown and Veſtments to be Repreſentations of *his* Authority and *Divine* Perfections, wherein he exactly agrees with the Author to the *Hebrews*. And from *ſundry* Paſſages in the *Book of Pſalms* it ſeems evident, that the *good Jews* had a Proſpect beyond the *Outſide* and Letter of the Law, even into the *typical* Senſe,

Sense and Meaning of it; and that through its *glimmering* Shadows and Resemblances, they beheld very much of the Substance and Realities of the *Gospel:* For hence probably was that of *David*, Psal. xxv. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*; for certainly the *Secret of the Lord* here cannot be meant the *Fore-Knowledge* of *future Events*, since under the *Old Testament* that was neither restrained to *good* Men, nor much *less* was it universally with them that feared *God*; and therefore it seems more probable, that by *it* we are to understand those *then secret* Mysteries of the *Gospel*, which were so obscurely represented in Types and Figures of the *Law*; especially if we compare this with that Prayer of *David*, Psal. cxix. 18. *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold the wondrous Things out of thy Law*, which methinks plainly intimates that the *good* Man did believe there were some *wondrous* Mysteries contained under those *dark* and *typical* Representations: And afterwards, ver. 27. *Make me to understand the way of thy Precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous Works*; which implies that he believed that there were some things very *mystical* and *hard* to be understood, contained within the Precepts of their Law, which in their *literal* Sense were *easy* and *obvious*, and had nothing of Depths or Mystery in them; and therefore, certainly, had he not seen something within them beyond their Rind and *Outside*, he would never have prayed so earnestly as he doth, *that God would teach him his Laws*, and that *he would not hide from him his Commandments*,

as

as he doth, *ver.* 19. Much leſs would he have imagined, that by *underſtanding of them he ſhould be enabled to talk of ſuch wondrous Things.* Afterwards, *verſe* 69, he tells us, that *he had ſeen an End of all Perfection, but God's Commandments are exceeding broad*; which denotes that he who had ſeen an End of all Things elſe, had diſcovered ſo *vaſt* and *boundleſs* a Depth in the Commands of *God*, that he could ſee no End of it; whereas it is plain, that the *literal* Meaning of them was very *narrow* and *contracted*, and far from being ſo exceeding *broad*; which argues that the *good* Man had diſcovered, under the Letter and Surface of them, a Mine of *myſtical* Senſe which he could not reach the Bottom of, and that *God* had given him a Glimpſe of thoſe *glorious* Secrets of the *Goſpel* which he had wrapped up, and involved in the *typical* Precepts of the Law. Thus the *Eternal Word*, while he tabernacled among the *Jews*, revealed his *Goſpel* to them by *Types* and *Shadows*, and *myſtical Repreſentations* of it, which, though it was very *obſcure* and *imperfect*, yet ſeems to have been the *beſt* and *cleareſt* that the *preſent* State of that People could admit of. For it ſeems plain by the Hiſtory of the *Jews*, that they were naturally a very *rude* and *untractable* People, and doubtleſs they were never worſe than when they came out of the Land of *Egypt*, where their *bad* Temper was doubtleſs very much improved by thoſe *groſs* Idolatries in which they had been educated; ſo that being *bad* themſelves, and alſo extremely *debauched* by the *wicked* Manners of the *Egyptians*,

Egyptians, it is not to be supposed that they were Subjects capable of the Heights and Purities of *Religion*; for if from the *Depth* of *Immortality*, whereinto they were sunk, *God* should have immediately strained them up to the *highest* Pitch of *Gospel-Purity*, in all Probability they would never have borne it; but like the Strings of a *musical Instrument*, being wound *too high*, would have been apt to crack and fly in pieces, and wholly to revolt from *God* into those *gross* Idolatries which yet they were hardly weaned from, and which were still so *suitable* to their Genius and Temper. So that as yet there was so *great* a Gulph between *them* and the *Gospel*, that it was hardly possible either for them to go to *that*, or for *that* to come to *them*. And therefore as *God* in his own *high* Wisdom hath placed a *Twilight* between the Night and the Morning to secure our Sight, lest our *weak* Eyes should be dazzled by a *too sudden* Irruption of the *Broad-Day*'s Glory; so did he deal with the *Jews:* He thought it not *convenient* immediately to post them out of *utter* Darkness into *perfect* Light, but first interposes a *less pure Religion* as a *Medium* or *Twilight* between the *Heathen* and the *Gospel State*, that so by *that* he might prepare their Sight for the Reception of a more *perfect* Splendor, and make them fit to entertain the *severer* Purities of the *Gospel*, without being offended or dazzled with its Glory. But yet in Wisdom he hath so contrived and modelled this *less perfect Religion*, as to make it most *instructive* and *useful*, having so ordered its *sacred* Rites and Ceremonies,

monies, as to make them *Repreſentative* of the whole Method and *Oeconomy* of the *Goſpel*; and though thoſe *typical* Repreſentations were very *obſcure* and *dark*, ſo that the *Goſpel* ſeemed to run under Ground in the midſt of thoſe *ceremonial* Obſervances, yet it frequently broke forth, and opened itſelf in the midſt of them, and by Degrees, in the *prophetick Age*, did make it a larger Channel, till by its Force and Violence it did overthrow thoſe Banks that ſtood in its Way, and overſpread the Face of the whole Earth. So that it is plain that the Obſcurity of thoſe *typical* Repreſentations did not render them wholly uſeleſs, ſince they were not ſo obſcure, but thoſe who were *good*, and *diligent*, and *ſerious* in the Study of them, might be, and were inſtructed by them in whatſoever was *neceſſary* to make them *good* and *happy*. For though thoſe *Types* had not a Mouth to ſpeak out the *Goſpel*, yet they had a Hand to point to it, they being as it were *rude* Draughts of that which was afterwards to be drawn to the *greateſt* Life and Exactneſs; and this, it is plain, was underſtood by all *good* Men, whoſe Hearts were carried beyond the *outward* Letter of the Law, to the more *inward* and *ſpiritual* Meaning of it; wherein they diſcovered thoſe *Evangelical Myſteries* that were *vailed* and *hidden* under the *outward* Ceremonies, which made up that true *ſpiritual Cabala* which ſeems conſtantly to have been preſerved among the *true Iſraelites*, and which afterwards was more largely commented on by the *Prophets* of the *ſucceeding* Ages, whoſe Care it was to unlock this *Cabala*, or *ſpiritual* Senſe

Senſe of the Law, and to raiſe up the Hearts of that People to a *higher* Expectation of the *great* Things which were to come. So that you ſee the State and Condition of the *Jews* would not admit of a plain Diſcovery of the *Goſpel* to them, but required an *outward Ceremonial Religion*, *that* being moſt *accommodate* to their Genius and Temper; and therefore though the *Eternal Word* for the *preſent* Exigence eſtabliſhed ſuch a *Religion* among them, yet he wiſely framed and modelled it into a *typical* Repreſentation of the *Goſpel*, that ſo thereby he might prepare them for it, and ſo far inſtruct them in the Knowledge of it as was *neceſſary* to their Welfare and Happineſs. And hence the *Apoſtle* tells the *Jews*, that *the Law was their School-Maſter to bring them unto Chriſt*, that they might be juſtified by Faith, and that now after *Faith* was come, they were *no longer under their School-Maſter*. Gal. iii. 4, 25, that is, while they were in their *Infantine*, *Childiſh* State, and *incapable* of a more *perfect* Inſtitution, *God* ſet the Law as a *School-Maſter* over them, that *that* by its *Types*, and *Pictures*, and *Emblems*, might gradually inſtruct them in the *Myſteries* of *Chriſt*, and the *Goſpel*, that ſo when it was openly revealed they might be *juſtified* by the Belief of it; and therefore now ſince the *Goſpel* was come, they were no longer under the Tutorage of that *School-Maſter*; now they were no longer to learn *Chriſt* by *Types* and *myſtical* Repreſentations, ſince he himſelf was preſent with them, and had openly revealed thoſe *divine* Myſteries which under thoſe *Types* were ſo obſcurely *adumbrated*.

So

So that you see the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews* in a far *different* Manner from what he did when he pitched his Tabernacle in *our* Natures; for when he tabernacled among *them* he was *full* of *Types* and *Shadows*, and *mystical Emblems*; he instructed them in *divine* Things by *Symbols*, and *obscure* Representations; but when he came to tabernacle among *us*, and *our* Natures, he was *full of Truth*, that is, of *Substance* and *Reality*: For then instead of the *Shadows* and *Pictures* of them, he exhibited to us the Things themselves; then he brought down the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel* out of that Cloud of *Types* in which they were before involved, and set them before us in a *clear* and *open* Light.

But that I may more *fully* demonstrate this to you, I shall briefly give you some *particular* Instances of his dwelling, or conversing among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure typical* Way of his conversing, or tabernacling among the *Jews*; which I shall rank under these four Heads:

1. His *Personal* Transactions.
2. The *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws.
3. The *Condition* and *Quality* of his Kingdom.
4. The *Rewards* and *Recompences* which he promises to his Subjects.

1. One *great* Instance of his conversing among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure* and *typical* way of his Conversing among the *Jews*, is his *own personal* Transactions. The *eternal*

eternal Word being to aſſume our Natures, thought fit to give the *Jews*, whilſt he tabernacled among them, a *Specimen*, or Pattern of thoſe *glorious* things he was to tranſact in his *incarnate State*; and this he did chiefly by the *High Prieſt*, and thoſe *expiatory Sacrifices* which he ordained and inſtituted among them, as you may find it demonſtrated at large in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. For, as to the *High Prieſt*, He was *to be called, and ordained of God*, Heb. v. 4; in which the *eternal Word* repreſented to them his Commiſſion from the Father, to deſcend into the World as his *Embaſſador* to Men. *Secondly*, He was to be born of a Woman that came a *pure Virgin* into the Arms of his Father, *Levit.* xxi. 14; in which he ſeems to repreſent to them his own *pure* Nativity of a *Virgin-Mother*. *Thirdly*, He was to be waſhed with Water, and his Fleſh and Loins were to be covered with the *whiteſt* and the *cleaneſt* Linen, *Exod.* xxix. 7. and xxviii. 42; by which Chriſt *typified* to them the *IMMACULATE* Sanctity and Innocence of his *human* Life. *Fourthly*, He was to be cloathed in the moſt *glorious* Garments that could poſſibly be made by the moſt *excellent* Workmen, *Exod.* xxviii. 2, 3; which ſeems to denote the *Majeſty* of Chriſt's Perſon, and thoſe *glorious* Works by which he rendered himſelf ſo *illuſtrious* in the World. *Fifthly*, The Colours of the *Embroideries* of his Garment being *blue*, *purple*, *ſcarlet*, and *white*, ſeem to denote the *Truth* of his *prophetick Office*, the *Majeſty* of his *Royal*, the *Perfection* of his *Prieſtly*, and his *Innocence* and *Sanctity* in the

the Execution of them all. *Sixthly*, He wore a *holy Crown* on his Head, and a *Plate* on his Forehead engraven with *Holineſs*; which denotes the *Divine Authority* of *Chriſt*, and the *Sacredneſs* and *Divinity* of his Perſon. And, *Seventhly*, Upon his Breaſt he wore the *Urim* and *Thummim*, in which was prefigured the *Height* and *Purity* of Chriſt's Doctrine, and the *Holineſs* and *Perfection* of his Laws. In a Word, the *High Prieſt* was to offer Sacrifice for the Sins of the People, on the *great Day of Expiation*, which Sacrifice was to be a *Beaſt without Blemiſh*, voluntarily preſented at the Door of the Tabernacle, whither the *High Prieſt* being come, he was to ſtrip *off* his *glorious* Garment, to lay his Hand on the Head of the Beaſt, and to confeſs the Peoples Sins over it, and then to ſlay the Beaſt, and carry ſome of the Blood of it within the *Veil*, and ſprinkle it upon, and before the *Mercy-Seat*, by which he is ſaid to make an Atonement for their Sins; that is, to obtain Authority from God to bleſs and pardon: In which the *eternal Word* gives us a plain Repreſentation of his *future Sacrifice* upon *Earth*, and *Interceſſion* in *Heaven*; for he being both our *Sacrifice* and *High Prieſt*, did freely diveſt himſelf of the Glory and Dignity of his *divine Nature*, and offer up himſelf to die for us; by which he laid his Hand, as it were, upon his own *ſpotleſs* and *immaculate* Head, did, as our *Repreſentative*, acknowledge what he had deſerved, that for our Sins we have juſtly merited to die *for ever* by the Hand of *God*, even as He for our Sakes, did ſubmit to die by the

Hand of Man: And having performed this *bloody Sacrifice*, he enters into *Heaven*, which is the true *Holy of Holies*, and there, by the Obligation of his Blood and Obedience, makes an Atonement for our Sins, and obtain Authority from his Father to pardon and receive into Favour every truly *penitent* Offender in the World. Thus you ſee how the *perſonal Tranſactions* of our *Saviour* were under the Law of *Moſes* repreſented in *myſtical* Types and Figures; but when he came to tabernacle among us, he did all *that* which before he only repreſented: He actually came down from the Father to us, was born of the *Holy Virgin*, lived a moſt *holy* and *innocent* Life, died a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, and is gone into *Heaven* to intercede for us: So that now, inſtead of *Types* and *Figures*, we have the *Subſtances* and *Realities* that were obſcurely ſhadowed and repreſented in them.

2. Another *great* Inſtance of his converſing among us *full of Truth*, is the *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws. It is *apparent* that thoſe which he gave to the *Jews*, according to the *literal* Senſe of them, did only oblige them to an *external Obedience*; and therefore St. *Paul* calls the whole Law a *carnal Commandment*, Heb. vii. 16. and the Precepts of it he calls *carnal Ordinances impoſed upon them till the Time of Reformation*, Heb. ix. 10. But yet it is apparent, that by theſe *carnal Ordinances* the *eternal Word* did deſignedly *typify* and repreſent that *internal* Purity of Soul which the *evangelical Law* doth exact: For he ſeeing that the *Jews* were not only a *perverſe*, but alſo a *dull* and *ſottiſh* People, as thoſe

thoſe generally are who are born and bred in Slavery, and that therefore they were *incapable* of *ſublime* and *ſpiritual* Precepts, and would be apt to forget *plain* ones: He therefore thought it moſt proper and ſuitable to their Capacity and Genius, to inſtruct them by *ſenſible* and *material* Signs, even as Parents do ſometimes teach their Children by Pictures; for of this his Condeſcenſion to their Dulneſs and Capacity, the Prophet *Iſaiah* takes Notice, *Chap.* xxviii. 10, 11. where he ſaith, that he gave them *Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, here a little and there a little with a ſtammering Tongue*; that is, he looked upon them as Children, and ſo condeſcended to their Weakneſs, and ſpoke to them in their *own* Dialect. And this way of inſtructing them by *outward* and *viſible* Signs, was the moſt *probable* to take Effect, becauſe it was much in uſe in the *Eaſtern Countries*, but more eſpecially in *Egypt*, whoſe Manners they were infinitely fond of, to wrap up their moſt *excellent* Precepts in *Hieroglyphicks*, which were nothing but Pictures and *material* Signs, by which they repreſented their *divine* and *moral* Inſtitutions. Thus therefore by ſuch *viſible* Signs and Pictures, the *eternal Word* inſtructed them in the Rules of *internal* Purity and Goodneſs; ſo by *Circumciſion* he ſignified to them the Circumciſion of their Hearts; and by their *ſeveral Waſhings*, Purity from *Hypocriſy* and *Senſuality*: Yea, this was probably the Intent of that Difference of *Meats*, as St. *Barnabas* in his Epiſtle tells us, that Swines Fleſh was pronounced *unclean*, to inſtruct them not to live

like *Hogs* that clamour when they are *hungry*, and forget their Masters when they are *full*; that *Eagles*, and such *ravenous Birds* were forbidden to be eat, to teach them that those who live not by *Industry*, but *Rapine*, are *abominable*; that *Fish without Scales*, which generally dwell in the Mud, were all pronounced *unclean*, to teach them the Evil of *Sensuality*, and *Earthly-Mindedness*. Thus, by these *outward* Signs, his Intent was to insinuate into them *internal* Purity of Mind; and this was very well understood by those who were *good* and *wise* among them: Hence we find *David* gives very *high Encomiums* of the Law, *Psal.* xix. 7, 8. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, making wise the simple; rejoicing the Heart, enlightening the Eyes*, &c. which Characters are *proper* only to that *inward* and *spiritual* Sense of the Law, that was *decyphered* upon those *outward* Signs and Ceremonies. Which Sense seems to have been very *little* taken Notice of by the *sottish Vulgar*; for only the Ceremony itself was Matter of Law to them, which if they observed they were not *punishable* by that Law, though they never took Notice of its *spiritual* Sense and Meaning, which made them neglect that *inward* Purity which was pictured on those *outward* Signs, and place the whole of their Righteousness in an *outside ceremonious* Pageantry. Hence is that of St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15; *I used*, saith he, *great Plainness of Speech: And not as* Moses, *which put a Veil over his Face, that the Children of* Israel *could not stedfastly look unto the End of that which*

which is abolished. But their Minds were blinded; for until this Day remaineth the same Veil untaken away, in the reading the Old Testament; which Veil is done away in Christ. By which *Veil* he means those *outward* Shadows and Types in which the *mystical* Sense of the Law was wrapped and involved; and it seems they were so taken with the Pomp and Gaiety of the *outside*, that they never minded that *rich* Treasure of Sense that was contained within it, and which the *Apostle* here calls *the End of that which is abolished*; yea, *to this Day*, saith he, the Veil of *outward* Ceremonies stands so much in their Light, that they cannot discern the *internal* Sense of the *Old Testament*; but now, saith he, it is *done away by Christ*. Now that the *eternal Word* hath pitched his Tabernacle in our Nature, those *outward* Types wherein this *inward* Purity of Soul was so obscurely intimated, are vanished like Clouds before the Sun, and in their Room are introduced the most *pure* and *spiritual* Laws of the Gospel, which are no longer couched in Types and *ceremonial* Shadows, but in *plain* and *naked* Propositions. Now *internal* Holiness is palpably declared to be the *great* Design of *Religion*, that we should *cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the Fear of God.* This therefore is *another* Instance of Christ's tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, viz. the *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws, which heretofore he *mystically* represented to the *Jews* by *outward* Rites and Ceremonies.

3. Another Inſtance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradiſtinction to that *obſcure Typical* Way of his converſing among the *Jews*, is the Condition and Quality of his *Church* and *Kingdom*. The *Eternal Word*, deſigning to erect a *glorious* Kingdom in the World, drew as it were a *rude* Scheme, or Draught of it, in the Form and Model of the *Jewiſh Polity*. For *firſt* he erects a Kingdom among them of which himſelf was King, to typify that *ſpiritual* Kingdom which afterwards he meant to eſtabliſh in the World; then he adopts the *Jews* to be his Children by the *external* Sign of *Circumciſion*, who are therefore called a *Holy Seed*, which was an Emblem of that *Holy Seed* which afterwards he deſigned to beget to himſelf by *ſpiritual* Regeneration, which is therefore called the *Circumciſion of the Heart, whoſe Praiſe is not of Men, but of God*. His delivering them from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and leading them thro' the *Red-Sea*, and the Wilderneſs, into *Canaan*, typified his delivering of his *future Church* from the Bondage of Sin and *Satan*, and leading it by his own *gracious* Preſence through the *Red-Sea* of Blood, and Perſecutions, and the Wilderneſs of the World, to the *Canaan* of *eternal* Reſt. His giving the Law on *Mount Sinai* in Fire, was a Figure of his delivering the *Goſpel* by the Spirit, which came down in *fiery cloven Tongues* at the *Feaſt of Pentecoſt*. Thus his erecting the Ark in the Wilderneſs was alſo *another* Type of that *ſpiritual* Kingdom, which afterwards he meant to erect in the World. The *diverſe* Ornaments and Inſtuments of

of that Tabernacle repreſented the Diverſity of *ſpiritual* Gifts and Functions in the *Chriſtian Church*; its being covered with Skins *without*, and adorned with Gold *within*, ſhadowed the *mean* and *contemptible* Form wherein the *Chriſtian Church* firſt appeared to the World, notwithſtanding the *inward* Glory and Purity with which it was adorned and embelliſhed. The Glory of *God* appearing in the Tabernacle, denoted the Preſence of *Chriſt* in his *Church*, which he hath promiſed to continue to the End of the World; its being removed from Place to Place, and finding no Reſt till it was lodged in the Temple, prefigured the *perſecuted* State of the *Primitive Church*, which was hunted *up* and *down* the World by the mighty *Nimrods* of the Earth, and could find no Reſt till it was tranſported to the *heavenly* Temple. By theſe, and ſuch like *Types* and *Shadows*, did the *Eternal Word* prefigure the State and Condition of his *future Church*, that ſo when it came to be erected in the World, the *Jews* might know and own it, having ſeen it before hand ſo exactly *decyphered* and *adumbrated* in the very Frame and Model of their *own* Polity. But when he came to tabernacle in our Nature, he gave *actual* Being to thoſe Things which before he only *ſhadowed* and *repreſented*; for then he erected this *glorious Church*, of which the *Jewiſh* was only a Model and Platform, delivered it from the *Egyptian* Bondage of Wickedneſs and Idolatry, and by his own *glorious* Preſence conducted the Members of it through all the Perſecutions of an *enraged* World, to the *Canaan* of *eternal Reſt*; and

therefore this alſo is *another plain* Inſtance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, the State and Condition of his Church, which before was ſo obſcurely repreſented.

4. And *laſtly*, *Another* Inſtance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradiſtinction to that *obſcure* and *typical* Way of his converſing among the *Jews*, is the *glorious* Recompences which he hath ſo plainly and clearly promiſed to his Subjects. For this he alſo obſcurely *typified* to the *Jews*; for, as I have already hinted, by that *Canaan* which he beſtowed upon them after their *tedious* Travel through the Wilderneſs, he did darkly repreſent to them that *Canaan above* flowing with *infinite* Delights, which he hath promiſed to beſtow upon his *faithful* Servants after they have paſſed through the Wilderneſs of this World. So alſo by their *Sabbaths*, and eſpecially their *Year of Jubilee*, wherein they were to reſt from all their Labours, and keep a *perpetual* Feſtivity, He did obſcurely *decypher* to them that *Sabbath of Reſt*, and *Jubilee* of *endleſs* Pleaſure, which *virtuous* Souls ſhall enjoy in *Heaven* after they have finiſhed their Labours here on *Earth*, as you may ſee at large, *Heb.* iv. Now by theſe, and ſuch like *Shadows* of their Law, which poſſibly the Prophets by *divine* Inſpiration might expound to them, thoſe who were *wiſe* and *good* among them, it is very probable, were inſtructed in the Article of *eternal Life*. Hence it may be might ariſe that *famous* Controverſy among the *Jews* concerning the *written* and *oral* Law, which they call the *Cabala*, or the Law by Tradition; not

not that this *traditional* contained any thing that was not in the *written* Law, but becauſe thoſe Things which were obſcurely contained in the *Types* of the *written* Law, were explained and interpreted in this their *traditional* Law. But it is *apparent* that the *Types* of *eternal Life* were not fully explained in this *traditional* Law till after the *Babyloniſh Captivity*, after which the Prophet *Daniel*, and after him *Ezekiel*, began to ſpeak more plainly of the *Reſurrection of the Dead*; and from that Time forwards the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* and *eternal Life* began to be more openly taught among the *common People* till about the Time of the *Maccabees*, when it was brought forth into the Light from under thoſe *Types* in which it was ſo obſcurely repreſented, and became a Principle even of the *popular Religion*, and an Article of the *Jewiſh Faith*, as plainly appears from the Records of thoſe Times, particularly 2 *Macc.* vii. 23, 26. compared with *Heb.* xi. 35. And indeed it was very *neceſſary* that then this Article ſhould be more clearly revealed, to fortify the *Jews* againſt thoſe many Perſecutions whereunto they were expoſed for the Sake of their *Religion*, that they might not be terrified to *apoſtatize* from it by thoſe *cruel* Martyrdoms which in the Time of the *Maccabees* they many of them endured; and beſides, now the Time of the *Goſpel* was approaching, and conſequently its Myſteries, like the Light of the *riſing* Sun, began to break forth *clearer* and *clearer* from under that Cloud of *Types* wherein it was wrapped and involved, till at laſt the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* himſelf aroſe

aroſe and diſperſed thoſe Clouds, and brought *Life and Immortality to Light by the Goſpel.* But as for the *Sadducees*, who give no Heed to the *Cabala*, or *traditional* Law, in which this Doctrine was firſt diſcovered, and adhered only to the *written* Law of *Moſes*, they ſtill continued Infidels in this Point, and believed neither *Angels* nor *Spirits*, nor the *Life to come:* So very obſcurely was it repreſented in the *Types* and *Shadows* of the *written* Law. But when once the *Eternal Word* came to tabernacle in our Fleſh, he revealed this *great* Article ſo plainly and clearly to the World, that it is impoſſible for any one not to believe it, that believes him to be the *Meſſias*, or *incarnate Word.*

And thus you ſee, by all theſe Inſtances, what a *vaſt* Difference there was in reſpect of *Truth*, between Chriſt's tabernacling in our Nature, and in the Tabernacle of *Moſes.* And now I ſhall conclude this Argument with two or three *practical* Inferences.

1*ſt*, He dwelt or tabernacled among us.] From hence I infer the *high* Authority of *Chriſt*, and that *holy Religion* which he hath revealed to us. For to tabernacle among us, as I have already ſhewed you, ſignifies to dwell in the midſt of, as the *Shechinah*, *Preſence*, or *Repreſentative* of the moſt *high God*, as one that acted in his Father's Perſon, and was veſted with his Authority, and conſequently as one who hath as *great* a Right to exact our Obedience as the *Eternal Father* himſelf, ſhould he have come down from *Heaven* in his own Perſon to give Laws to Mankind.

kind. For ſo when the *Eternal Word* went before the Camp of *Iſrael* as the *Shechinah*, or *Angel of God's Preſence*, God requires them that they ſhould obey *him* as himſelf: *Beware of him and obey his Voice*, ſaith God; *provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Tranſgreſſions, for my Name is in him.* Exod. xxiii. 21, and *ver.* 22. To obey the Voice of this *Angel* is interpreted to be the ſame Thing as to obey the Voice of the moſt *High God* himſelf; *but if thou ſhalt indeed obey his Voice*, ſaith God, *and do all that I ſpeak, then I will be an Enemy to thy Enemies*, &c. So that for the *Iſraelites* to diſobey this *Angel* (who, as I have proved to you, was the *Eternal Word*, or *Repreſentative* of the moſt *High God* to them) was to all Intents and Purpoſes the ſame Thing as if they had diſobeyed the moſt *High* himſelf. And accordingly our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on the Father that ſent me*; that is, he doth not merely believe on me, but on the Father *too*, whoſe Authority I have, and whoſe Perſon I repreſent; for ſo he explains himſelf in the *following* Verſe. *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me*; that is, I being my Father's *Shechinah*, or *Repreſentative*, *John* xii. 44, 45. And therefore as every Contempt of the *Deputy*, or *Vice-Governor*, is an Affront to the *Sovereign* Prince whoſe Perſon he bears, and by whoſe Authority he acts; ſo every Rebellion againſt *Chriſt* is an *open* Defiance to the *Sovereign God*, whoſe Perſon he repreſents, and by whoſe Authority he reigns. Hence our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*,

John

John v. 23. that *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*; which plainly intimates that *God* the Father resents those Indignities which we offer to *Christ* and his Laws, as if they were done to his own Person, and that if *himself* should speak to us from the Battlements of *Heaven*, or proclaim his Law to us in a *Voice* of *Thunder*, he would not be more displeased to hear us openly declare that we will not obey him, than he is to see us trample upon the Laws of his *Son*, which he hath stamped with his own *Sovereign* Authority. So that if we were not infinitely *fool-hardy*, methinks, we should never dare to violate our *Religion*, in which the Authority of the most *high God* is so immediately concerned. For whatsoever our *Religion* requires of us, it requires in his Name, who hath an *undoubted* Right and Authority to command us; for from all *Eternity* he was invested with an *absolute* and *unlimited* Power of doing any thing that is not *unbecoming* his *Divine* Perfections, and in this the Right of his Dominion over us is originally founded. For he that hath Power, must needs have a Right to exercise it so far as it is *just* and *becoming* his Nature, otherwise his Power would be altogether in vain; and therefore since *God* from all *Eternity* hath a Power of doing whatsoever he pleases, so far as is *consistent* with his Holiness and Goodness, there is nothing can be pretended against the Right of his Dominion and Authority over us: For God *cannot* but have an *eternal* Right to exercise his own Power, and he cannot but have an

immutable

immutable Right to exerciſe it over his own Creatures. And as from all *Eternity* he had Power to do whatſoever was *juſt* and *becoming* him, ſo from his creating of us it became moſt *juſt* and *becoming* that he ſhould rule and govern us; for we became *his* as ſoon as we were created by him; all our Powers of Action were from him, and by that he hath acquired an *unalienable* Right in whatſoever we are able to do. We have nothing but what is *his* Gift, and therefore can do nothing but what is *his* Debt; we received *all* from him, and therefore muſt owe *all* to him; for by Right of Creation he is the *ſupreme* Proprietor of all our Powers and Faculties, and, as ſuch, hath a *juſt* Claim to all the Homage and Obedience that we are able to render him. So that as God's Dominion over us is originally founded in his moſt *abſolute* Power to do whatſoever is *juſt* and *becoming* him; ſo the Juſtice and Becomingneſs of his Dominion over us doth immediately reſult from his creating of us, by which he hath *for ever* entitled himſelf to all the Obedience we can render him. And by Virtue of this *immutable* Title doth he claim our Obedience to the Laws of *Jeſus Chriſt*, whom next to himſelf he hath made our Prince and Ruler, having veſted him with his own *ſovereign* Authority, and conſtituted him his *ſupreme* Repreſentative in the *Church*. So that by diſobeying his Laws, we incur the Guilt of the moſt *monſtrous* Injuſtice in the World; we reſume ourſelves from *him* to whom we owe our Being, and refuſe to own *ourſelves* to be his Creatures, from whoſe Bounty we receive even

even the Power of rebelling against him; we alienate our Faculties from those *sacred* Uses whereunto they were designed and consecrated, and turn these *living* Temples of *God* into Dens of *impure* Thoughts and *filthy* Lusts: In a Word, we fight against *God* with his *own* Gifts, and arm the Effects of his Bounty against his *sovereign* Authority. And what do we think will be the Consequence of these Things? Can we be so *sottish* as to imagine that the *Almighty* Father will sit above in the *Heavens*, and see how his Laws are trampled upon, his Authority contemned, and exposed to Scorn and Derision by a Company of *impious* Wretches, that owe their very Beings to him, and never be concerned at it? Do we think him so *stupid* a Being as that no Provocations will awake his Vengeance, that he will *for ever* sit *unconcerned* with his Hands in his Bosom, whilst his *violated* Laws, like the *Souls under the Altar*, are continually crying out to him, *How long, O Lord, holy and true! dost thou not avenge our Quarrel upon the Heads of these audacious Rebels that every Day trample us under Foot, and have no more Regard for our Authority, than they have for the Whistling of the Wind!* For God's Sake, Sirs, let us consider before it be *too* late, what is like to become of us, what *probable* Hopes of Security we can propose to *ourselves* if we persist in this *unjust* Rebellion. Gird up your Loins like Men, and I will demand of you in the Name of *God*, do you think that the *wise* Governor of the World will be *for ever insensible* of all the *rude* Affronts and Provocations you offer him? If so,

ſo, pray where is his *Wiſdom*, or in what Senſe doth he govern the World, if he takes no care to ſecure his Laws by *puniſhing* Offenders, and lets his Subjects alone to do as they liſt? Or have you an Arm as *ſtrong* as God's? Can you grapple with his *Almighty* Vengeance, or withſtand the Stroke of his Thunderbolts? Sure ſuch a *ridiculous* Conceit can never enter into any *reaſonable* Breaſt? And if not, in the Name of *God*, what do you propoſe to *your-ſelves*, when you can neither hope for Favour from God, nor Security from *yourſelves?* Are you ſo *abandoned* of all your Reaſon, as wilfully to ſhut your Eyes againſt your Danger, and run the *deſperate* Venture of falling into the Hands of the *living God?* Hath not our *bleſſed Lord* moſt fairly warned us what we are to truſt to? Hath he not told us how he *values* his Laws, and how dreadfully he will *puniſh* the Tranſgreſſion of them? Hath he not moſt ſeriouſly proteſted to us, that unleſs we do *repent* and *amend*, he will never forgive us, either in *this* Life, or *that to come*; and that if we ſtill perſiſt in our Rebellions, he will at laſt baniſh us from his Preſence *for ever*, and aſſign us our Portion with *Devils* and *damned Ghoſts*, in that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone? And hath he not taken it upon his Death that all this is true, when he ſo freely *ſealed* his Doctrines with his Blood? And now after all this, is it poſſible we ſhould be ſo *ſenſeleſs*, as to think we can be *ſafe* in our Wickedneſs, when *God the Father* is engaged both in *Wiſdom* and *Honour* to avenge it as an Affront to his Authority, and *God the Son*

Son hath revealed his Father's Wrath from *Heaven* againſt all Unrighteouſneſs and Ungodlineſs of Men? And therefore, as we value our own Safety, it concerns us either to ſubmit to that *Divine* Authority which is ſtamped upon the Laws of our *Saviour*, or elſe to ſecure ourſelves of ſome Retreat, or Sanctuary, from that *Almighty* Vengeance which our Rebellion will certainly arm againſt us.

2*dly*, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*.] Hence I infer what *mighty* Encouragement we have to ſerve and obey our *bleſſed Maſter*, who in his dwelling among us was *full* of every thing that can render his Service *lovely*, or *deſirable*, and abounded in all thoſe *amiable* Graces that can oblige us to love and obey him. For what was there wanting in our *bleſſed Maſter* that any reaſonable Subject can deſire in his *Prince* and *Sovereign*? Would he deſire a Prince of a *ſweet* and *gracious* Temper, one that is *full* of Love and Tenderneſs to his Subjects? Such a one, in the moſt *eminent* Degree, is our *bleſſed Lord*; for how doth the Hiſtory of his Converſation upon Earth abound with the Expreſſions of a moſt *ſweet* and *loving* Temper? For Love was the Principle of all his Actions, the Life and Soul of his Converſation; and in all that he did, or ſpoke, he made ſome new Diſcovery of his *unfeigned* Affection to the World; for he *went about doing Good*, and his whole Life was nothing but one *continued Act* of Charity to Mankind. For ſtill you find him either *inſtructing* the *Ignorant*, or *reproving* the *Erroneous*, or *comforting* the *Dejected*, or *feeding* the *Hungry*, or *curing* the *Sick* and *Diſeaſed*.

Diſeaſed. From Morning to Night he was conſtantly engaged in *one good* Action or *other*, and the whole Race of his Life, like that of the Sun, was ſpent in *enlivening*, or *enlightening* the World. So *endearing* was his Behaviour, that he obliged his very Enemies, and when he had won them, treated them with all the Tenderneſs and Affection of a moſt *loving* Father towards his *deareſt* Children. From all he converſed with he extorted Reſpect and Veneration, and none were able to reſiſt the Charms of his *victorious* Love, but thoſe whoſe Hearts were harder than the *nether* Millſtone. But that I may convince you of the *infinite* Goodneſs and Tenderneſs of his Nature, I will give you but that *one* Inſtance, *Luke* xix. 41. *And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it*; which, as you will ſee afterwards, was occaſioned by the Foreſight of its *approaching* Ruin and Deſtruction; and yet at the ſame time he foreſaw the Cruelties which thoſe *barbarous* Villains were about to practiſe upon him, how they would ſcourge his Body with *knotty* Whips, and nail his Hands and Feet to the Croſs, and thruſt a Spear into his Heart: He ſaw how they would *triumph* over his Miſery, mock at his Calamity, and dance to the Muſick of his *dying* Groans. And now one would have thought ſuch a Proſpect as this would have *for ever* enraged his Soul againſt them, and made him rejoice to ſee that *ſweeping* Deſtruction that was coming upon them; but ſuch was the *incomparable* Sweetneſs of his Temper, that while he *foreſaw* them plotting his Ruin, he could not but ſigh over *theirs*,

and while he beheld their Malice all *reeking* in his Blood, and ſporting itſelf with his Torments and Agonies, yet at the Senſe of their *approaching* Deſtruction, his very Bowels *yearned*, and his Heart *melted* with Commiſeration, and he could not forbear weeping, to think that thoſe *curſed* Inſtruments of all his Miſeries, muſt e'er long be ſo *wretched* and *miſerable* themſelves, earneſtly wiſhing that they who ſo greedily thirſted for his Blood, had known *in that their Day the things which belong to their Peace.* And though one would have thought the *barbarous* Entertainment he met with here upon Earth, would have *for ever* quenched all his Affection to Mankind, yet ſtill it lives, and in Deſpite of all the Affronts and Outrages he endured, burns as vigorouſly in his Breaſt as ever. So *unconquerable* was his Love to his Subjects, that all the *bloody* Cruelties they practiſed upon him, when they chaſed him out of the World, were never able to *alienate* his Heart and Affections from them; but after all their Cruelties he ſtill retained his fatherly Bowels towards them, and when he could endure their Torments no longer, breathed out his *loving* Soul in an *earneſt* Prayer for their Pardon, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And now that he is in Heaven among *Angels* and *glorified Spirits*, where he cannot but remember how unkindly we treated him when he was upon *Earth*, and perhaps doth ſtill bear upon his *glorified Body* thoſe very Wounds which he received from our Hands, which one would think were *ſufficient* to incenſe him againſt us *for ever*; yet his Heart

Heart is the *ſame* towards us, *full* of all thoſe *kind* and *tender* Reſentments that firſt brought him down from Heaven, and rendered his Converſation among us ſo *full* of Sweetneſs and Endearments. And now being ſo infinitely kind as he is, why ſhould we be diſheartened from ſerving him? Methinks the Senſe of his Love to us, if there were no *other* Argument in the World, ſhould be *ſufficient* to bind us to his Service *for ever*. For, *O my Soul, how can I do too much for ſo kind a Friend! How can I be too ſubmiſſive to ſo good a Maſter! that is ſo infinitely tender of all his Servants, and loves them a thouſand times more than they love themſelves!* Sure if we had any Spark of Ingenuity in us, the Senſe of his *matchleſs* Kindneſs towards us, would be *ſufficient* to turn all our Duty to him into Recreation, to make us thirſt after his Service, and catch at all Opportunities of expreſſing our Loyalty and Obedience to him: We ſhould embrace his Commands as Preferments to us, and wear them as the *greateſt Favours*, and think ourſelves more *honoured* in being the Servants of *Jeſus Chriſt*, than in being made *mighty* Kings and Potentates.

2. Conſider, as he is *full* of Grace, in Reſpect of his own *perſonal* Diſpoſition, ſo he is alſo in Reſpect of his Laws, in which as I have already ſhewed you, he requires nothing of us but what is for our *Good*, nothing but what tends to the Perfection of our Natures, and the Conſummation of our Happineſs. All that our *Saviour* requires at our Hands, is only that we ſhould act according to the Laws of a *reaſonable*

Nature, and conſtantly purſue the great End of our Creation, which can never be obtained by us, unleſs we regulate our Actions by thoſe *wiſe* and *excellent* Rules which he hath preſcribed us, and which he hath preſcribed us upon no other Inducement, but only to oblige us to be *happy*. For as to any Advantage that will accrue to him from our Actions, it is altogether *indifferent* to him whether we obey him or no; for he was always infinitely *happy* within himſelf, and would have always been ſo, though we had never had a Being; ſo that his Felicity depends not upon us: and were it not that the *ſuperabundant* Goodneſs of his Nature doth *for ever* incline him to make *us happy* as well as *himſelf*, he would never have concerned himſelf about us, but would have let us alone to do as we liſt, and abandoned us to the Fate of *our own* Actions. He therefore being infinitely *happy* within himſelf, can have no Self-Ends to ſerve upon his Creatures; becauſe within the Circle of his own *divine* Being, he hath all that he needs, and all that he deſires; but being infinitely *good*, as he is infinitely *happy*, we are ſure that our Good muſt be the only End of his intermeddling with our Actions, and his giving Laws to direct them. And if we conſult the *particular* Laws which he hath given us, we ſhall find they all of them moſt naturally tend to *perfect* and *rectify* our *diſordered* Natures, to *exalt* and *ſpiritualize* our Affections, and inſpire us with all thoſe *divine* Diſpoſitions that are requiſite to qualify us for the Happineſs of the World to come. And now, methinks, if we had any Senſe of

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our own Intereſt, this Conſideration ſhould mightily encourage us to Obedience, to think that while we are ſerving our *bleſſed Maſter*, we are ſerving ourſelves to the *beſt* Purpoſes, and that his Service and our Intereſt are ſo combined and united, that by the ſame Actions we may gratify *him*, and do *ourſelves* the *greateſt* Kindneſs in the World; that he exacts nothing from us, but what he was obliged to do by the *infinite* Care and Concern he hath for us; and that he had been leſs *kind*, ſhould he have required *leſs*, and muſt neceſſarily have ſubſtracted from us ſome Degree of our Happineſs, ſhould he have abated us any Part of our Duty. *O bleſſed Jeſus!* who can complain of thy Service, when thy very Commands are Tokens of thy Love; when all the Duty thou requireſt of us, is only to be *kind* to *ourſelves* in doing thoſe Things, which, if thou hadſt never commanded, *our own* Intereſt would have obliged us to, had we but underſtood it as well, or regarded it as much as thou doſt?

3. But then conſider again, as He is *full of Grace* to us in his own *perſonal* Temper, and in thoſe *mild* and *gentle* Laws which he hath given us; ſo, *Thirdly*, He is *full of Grace* to us alſo in reſpect of that *gracious* Pardon and Forgiveneſs which he hath procured for, and promiſed to us, if we will heartily repent and amend. I confeſs, though his *perſonal* Temper ſhould be never ſo *ſweet*, and his Laws never ſo *gentle*, yet if he ſhould, upon every *wilful* Offence, exclude us from all Hope of Pardon, it might juſtly diſcourage the Generality of Men from engaging any farther in his Service;

becauſe, *more* or *leſs*, we have all ſinned, and fallen ſhort of the Glory of God. So that if upon every *wilful* Act of Rebellion, we ſhould ſtand *for ever* excluded from his Favour, we ſhould generally be left in a *deſperate* Condition, and then to what Purpoſe ſhould we ſerve him any longer, when by all our *future* Loyalty and Submiſſions, we muſt never hope to be re-admitted into his Grace and Favour! To remove this *great* Diſcouragement therefore the *bleſſed Jeſus* hath obtained for us this *publick Grant* and *Charter* of Mercy from his Father, that if now at laſt we will repent and amend our ways, notwithſtanding all our *paſt* Rebellions, we ſhall find Mercy, and be as freely received into his Grace and Favour, as if we never had offended him; and this *merciful* Grant he hath publiſhed to us in the Promiſes of his Goſpel: So that now we cannot make the *leaſt* Doubt of our Pardon and Acceptance with him, upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, without calling his Truth and Veracity into Queſtion. And now what *reaſonable* Cauſe of Diſcouragement have we from returning to the Service of our *bleſſed Maſter*, when we are ſo amply aſſured that our *paſt* Diſobedience to him ſhall, upon our Return, be forgotten *for ever?* For in the Name of *God*, what can we deſire more? Is it *reaſonable* that the *wiſe* Governor of the World ſhould pardon Offenders, whether they repent or no; that he ſhould let them take their Swing in Wickedneſs, and never take any Cognizance of their Actions? Let us ſpeak plainly; would we have him govern us or no? If not, we are infinitely

beſotted

beſotted, that for the Sake of a *few paltry* Luſts, that are our *Plague* and *Shame*, would deprive ourſelves of all the Bleſſings and Benefits of his Government. But whatſoever we would have, it is by no means fit that he ſhould ſurrender up his *juſt* Authority over us, becauſe we are Fools and Madmen; and if we think it fit that he ſhould govern us, we cannot be ſo *ſenſeleſs* as to think it *reaſonable* that he ſhould pardon our Sins till we repent of them; becauſe by ſo doing he would give *up* all, and leave us *abſolute* Maſters of ourſelves. So that if we *ourſelves* had been called to the *Privy Council* of *Heaven*, to give our Vote to thoſe Laws by which we were to be ruled and governed, doubtleſs we could not have had the Confidence to aſk either *gentler* Laws, or *greater* Indulgences, than the *bleſſed Jeſus* hath freely granted us in his *Goſpel*. If *God* ſhould have told us, that he would impoſe nothing on us without *our own* Conſent, and bid us aſk for ourſelves any thing that is *fit* and *modeſt*, doubtleſs the utmoſt that any *modeſt* Man could have craved, would have been only this; *Lord, if thou will be but ſo merciful as to give us ſuch Laws as are ſuited to our Natures, and are conducive to our Happineſs, and ſo far to conſider our Weakneſs and Inſtability, as not to caſt us away from thy Favour for ever upon every wilful Tranſgreſſion, but to pardon and receive us again upon our unfeigned Repentance; this is all the Favour we would aſk, and for this we would praiſe and adore thy Goodneſs for ever and ever.* Sinc *God* therefore, out of *his own* Grace

and Goodneſs, hath granted this Indulgence to us, why ſhould we be diſcouraged from returning to our Duty. Though we never ſo notoriouſly violated and neglected it? For now we are fully aſſured that we can never be excluded from all Hope of Pardon, till we are paſt all Poſſibility of Repentance.

4. He is *full of Grace* to us alſo, in reſpect of that *abundant* Aſſiſtance which he hath promiſed and vouchſafed to us. I do confeſs, though notwithſtanding our *former* Rebellions, he ſhould be never ſo ready to receive us into Favour again upon our *unfeigned* Repentance; yet unleſs he will alſo aſſiſt us in *our* Repentance, and enable us to conquer the Difficulties of it, we have ſtill very *great* Reaſon to be diſcouraged from his Service: For by *our own evil* Habits, we have ſo diſabled ourſelves from returning to our Duty, that without the Concurrence of a *ſupernatural* Grace, it will be in vain for us to attempt it: For he that from a State of *habitual* Sin, enters into a Courſe of Repentance, muſt ſtrive all along againſt the Current of his Nature, which at firſt eſpecially, and when he is *weakeſt*, will be ſo *ſwift* and *impetuous*, that by his *own ſingle* Strength, it will be impoſſible for him to *ſtem*, or conquer it, and unleſs it be aſſiſted by a *greater* Strength than his *own*, he will be inevitably borne *down* and carried away with it, though he ſtruggle never ſo vigorouſly againſt it; ſo that it is no Encouragement at all to the Service of *Chriſt*, that he will receive us to Pardon when we heartily repent, unleſs he will alſo enable us to repent by the Concurrence of his *Grace* with

with our *honeſt* Endeavours. But this Diſcouragement alſo he hath removed out of our Way, by making us a *publick* Grant and Promiſe of his Grace and Aſſiſtance; for he hath aſſured us, that he will give *his holy Spirit to every one that aſks it*, Luke xi. 13. that if we will *work out our own Salvation he will work in us to will and to do.* Phil. ii. 12, 13, and that *to him that hath*, that is, improves that Grace which he hath, *it ſhall be given more abundantly.* Mat. xiii. 12. So that though we cannot do all by our own *ſingle* Strength, yet we can do ſo much as will oblige our *bleſſed* Maſter to enable us to do all; and therefore that we do not do all, is as much our Fault as if we could, becauſe we are able to do all through *Chriſt*, who will ſtrengthen us, if we will but do what we can; ſo that this, methinks ſhould be ſufficient to encourage any *reaſonable* Man in the World to undertake his Service, to conſider that he who is my Maſter, will *co-operate* with me, and *proportion* my Strength to the Work he enjoins me; that he will not ſtand *ſtill* with his Arms in his Boſom, and ſee me ſtruggle in *vain* under an *inſupportable* Burthen of Duties, but that he will ſet *to* his *own* Shoulders, and contribute his *own* Strength, and enable me, by Degrees, to undergo it with Eaſe and Alacrity; ſo that though through the *Weakneſs* and *Impotency* which I have voluntarily contracted, my Duty is become *too heavy* for my Shoulders, yet I will never be diſheartened ſo long as I am ſure it is not *too heavy* for my Saviour's, for if I heartily endeavour I am *confident* I ſhall undergo

dergo it, if it be in the Power of an *Almighty* Grace to enable me.

5. And *lastly*, He was *full of Grace* to us also, in respect of that *glorious* Recompence which he hath promised to us, and prepared for us. I confess, were his Service all Work, and no Wages, there were some Reason to be disheartened; but when he hath promised, and so amply assured us, that after we have spent a few Days, or Years, in his Service upon *Earth*, he will receive us into the Participation of *his own* Joys, where we shall commence as *happy* as it is possible for an *everlasting Heaven* to make us, methinks we should kiss his Yoke, and court his Service, and think we can never do too much for such a *bountiful* Master, who rewards all his Servants with such *immortal* Preferments: For what is the Labour of a few Moments, compared with that *everlasting* Rest and Pleasure wherein it shall shortly terminate? And when once we are arrived to the *heavenly Canaan*, and have tasted those *ravishing* Delights with which it flows and abounds, how *light* and *inconsiderable* will all these Difficulties in our Voyage appear to us, which now do so startle and affright us? How shall we wonder at *our own* Sloth and Faint-heartedness, to think that ever we should be such *wretched* Cowards as to be afraid of any thing that hath *Heaven* at the End of it, which is a Happiness so *vast* and *unspeakable*, that the Hope of it is *sufficient* to turn Torments into Recreations? How shall we be astonished at *ourselves*, to think that we could ever be such *wretched* Fools as to deliberate *one* Moment, whether

Heaven

Heaven were *preferable* before all the Pleasures of Sin, or whether it were more *eligible* to dwell with *Harlots* and *Drunkards* for a Moment, and wallow in their *beastly* Pleasures, than to enjoy the Society of *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, to all *Eternity?* The Odds will then appear so *vast*, and the Disproportion so *unspeakable*, that we shall wonder how we could ever be so *senseless* as to make a Comparison between them. Sure, Sirs, we do not believe that *Heaven* is the Recompence of Christ's Service; for if we did, methinks we should more heartily engage in it. For could we stand thus *deliberating* upon the Shoar, whether, we shall bid adieu to our Lusts, take leave of all their *fulsom* Pleasures, and embark *ourselves* in the Service of our *Saviour*; could we stand pausing *thus* as we do, whether we shall venture into those *petty* Storms that are like to attend us in our *spiritual* Voyage, did we verily believe that a *few* Leagues Distance lies that *blessed* Shore, where we shall be crowned as soon as we are landed with all the Joys that an *everlasting Heaven* means? Certainly the Belief of this is *sufficient* to put Life and Courage into the most *crest-fallen* Soul in the World, and to give her Spirit and Vigour enough to carry her triumphantly through all the *weary* Stages of her Duty. So that considering how, in all Respects, our *blessed Lord* abounds in Grace and Goodness to us, we have the *greatest* Encouragement imaginable to engage us to his Service.

3dly, *He was full of Truth.*] From whence I infer, that the *Christian Religion* is a very *plain*

plain and *intelligible* thing. For this, as I have shewed you at large, is one of the *great* Notes of Distinction between Christ's tabernacling among the *Jews* and among *Christians*, that whereas among the *Jews*, he was *full* of *obscure* Types and *mystical* Representations; among us *Christians*, he is *full* of Truth; that is, he is *plain*, and *open*, and *clear*, without any *dark* Reserves or Mysteries; now he hath plainly revealed that which before he did so obscurely *decypher*; now he hath *unriddled* all those *mystical* Types, and turned them as it were *inside outwards*, and given us their *hidden* Sense and Meaning in *plain* and *naked* Propositions; and of these our *holy Religion* is composed. So that those Doctrines which before were all *Mystery*, whilst they lay obscurely couch'd under the *Types* and *Figures* of the Law, are now brought forth from behind the Curtain into the *open* View of the World, and presented *barefaced* to our Understandings in the most *plain*, and *easy*, and *familiar* Sense: Not but that *Christianity* hath some Mysteries in it still, whose Depths we are not *able* to fathom; but it is not because *Christ* hath not revealed them, but because our Understandings are *incapable* of comprehending them; such are the Doctrines of the *Holy Trinity*, the *Incarnation* of our *blessed Saviour*, and the *Hypostatical Union* of the *divine* and *human* Nature in him: Nor indeed is it much to be wondered at, that we, who with all our Wit and Reason, are not able to explicate the Mysteries of a *Mite*, or *Flea*, of a *Plant* or a *Stone*, or any of those *innumerable* Things, that are before us, should not

not be able to underſtand ſuch *incomprehenſible*, to order ſuch *infinite*, or define ſuch *ineffable* things; but though we cannot comprehend the *Modes*, nor underſtand the *ſtrict Philoſophy* of them, yet if we would but ſtrip them out of their *falſe* Diſguiſes into their *original* Plainneſs and Simplicity, we might doubtleſs eaſily diſentangle them from all Repugnancy and Contradiction, which is *ſufficient* to render them rationally *credible*, they being contained in that *excellent Religion*, whoſe Truth is demonſtrated by ſuch *abundant* Evidence. But perhaps, as *God* continued all the Doctrines of *Chriſtianity* in a Myſtery among the *Jews*, and reſerved the *clear* Revelation of them to the Coming of the *Meſſias*; ſo for the ſame Reaſon he hath ſtill reſerved the *clear* Diſcovery of thoſe Doctrines which are ſtill Myſteries to us *Chriſtians*, for the *future* State, and then, it may be, we may as fully underſtand *theſe*, as the *believing Jews* (after the Coming of *Chriſt*) did thoſe *other* Doctrines of the *Goſpel*, which before were all Myſteries to them. But, *God* be praiſed, whatſoever is *neceſſary* to make us *good* and *happy*, is now ſo plainly diſcovered to us, that we cannot be *ignorant* of it unleſs we wilfully ſhut our own Eyes. We need not dive into *myſtical* Senſes, or *grope* after Truth among *Shadows* and *Umbrages*, as the good *Jews* were fain to do under the *Moſaick Diſpenſation*, all that is *neceſſary* to our Salvation being written as it were upon the very *Surface* of our *Religion*, and openly expoſed to our View in *plain* and *literal* Propoſals. And yet notwithſtanding the *Plainneſs* and *Simplicity* of the *Chriſtian Religion*,

Religion, there are too many, both among *ourselves*, and in the *Church of Rome*, who have industriously set themselves to resolve all its Doctrines again into Darkness and *unintelligible* Mysteries, having, instead of the *plain* Propositions of our *Saviour*, introduced a *new fashioned mystical Divinity*, made up of nothing but certain *empty* Schemes of *effeminate* Follies and *wild* Enthusiasms, which are impossible for any Man to understand that cannot *conjure* for the Meaning of them. And those Doctrines which our *Saviour* purposely delivered in the most *plain* and *literal* Sense, that so the *meanest* Understanding might be instructed by them, these Men have blown *up*, like so many Bubbles, into *swelling* Mysteries, which, being stripped of those *glittering Allusions*, and *pompous Metaphors*, wherein they are clothed, vanish immediately into Air, or sink into *flat* and *empty* Nonsense. For thus the Doctrine of *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and *Justification*, which lie as *plain* in the *Scripture* as Words can make them, are by their Divinity rendered more *obscure* and *mysterious* than ever they were whilst they were couched under the *Types* and *Figures* of the Law, more of the *true* Nature being discovered in *Circumcision*, and the *legal Washings* and Atonements, than in a *hundred* Volumes of *modern Systems of Divinity*. For, whatsoever is *intelligible*, they look upon as *carnal*, and till they have subtilized it into some *unaccountable* Mystery, it is not *spiritual* enough to be admitted into their *System of Divinity*, as if they thought it below the *Majesty of Religion*, to expose itself to the View

of

of the World, and there was no way to ſecure it from Contempt, but to lock it *up* in Myſteries and Obſcurities; for elſe to what Purpoſe ſhould they wrap it round with Clouds as they do, unleſs they deſign to make a Trade of it, and ſo draw a Curtain before it, as Men do before their *Puppet-Plays*, that ſo they may get Money by ſhewing it: For it is *apparent* that *Religion* itſelf ſuffers extremely by it; for whilſt they thus *ſpiritualize* it into Air, and do, as it were *juggle* it out of Sight in the Clouds of their *myſtical* Nonſenſe, they render it extremely *ſuſpicious* to all that are *wiſe* and *inquiſitive*, and will not ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed upon by the Trains of their *myſterious Gibberiſh*. And as for their more *credulous* Followers, whilſt they thus lead them by the Noſe through a Valley of *Shades* and *Darkneſs*, they utterly deprive them of the *vigorous* Warmth and Comforts of *Religion*; for how ſhould they know how to make uſe of the Arguments and Motives of *Chriſtianity*, when thoſe *excellent* Doctrines from whence they are deduced, are wrapped in *unintelligible* Myſteries? For how ſhould they draw forth from the Articles of their Faith, thoſe *practical* Principles that are lodged in them, when thoſe Articles are converted into Riddles, which they do not nor cannot underſtand? Thus, by turning *Chriſtianity* into a *Myſtery*, they do not only thwart the Deſign of our *Saviour*, which was to bring it forth from under the *myſterious* Repreſentations of the Law, and propoſe it to the World in the moſt *plain* and *intelligible* Manner; but they alſo *diſpirit Religion*

ligion itself, whose Life and Energy consists in being understood, and expose it to the Contempt and Scorn of those that have Wit enough to detect their Follies of their *Enthusiastical* Mysteries.

4*thly* and *lastly*; *He dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.*] From hence I infer the Inexcusableness of those Men that persist in their Disobedience to the *Gospel now* that our *blessed Lord* hath expressed so much Grace towards, and so clearly made known his Mind and Will to us. What Excuse can we urge to palliate our *wretched* Disobedience? If you will but imagine yourselves for a *little* while to be standing before the Tribunal of your *Saviour*, where, ere it be long, you must all appear, I will briefly draw up what in probability will be your Plea, and what may be reasonably presumed will be his *Answer*. "In the Name of "*Jesus* then let me demand of you, what "can you plead for your selves, why that "*fearful* Doom which he hath pronounced "against you, should not be passed upon you?" *Why, Lord, we know that thou wer't an austere Man, that thou wouldst exact of us to the utmost Punctilio, and that if ever we failed in the least Circumstance of our Duty, thou wouldest immediately let loose thy implacable Vengeance upon us; and this utterly disheartened us from thy Service, considering how impossible it was for us to please thee.* "Ah *wretched* Creatures! can you have the "Face to charge me with Rigour and Severity, "who have had so many *notorious* Experi-"ments of the Sweetness of my Nature, and "Tenderness

" Tenderneſs of my Affections towards you?
" What *one* Action was I ever guilty of in all
" my Converſation among you that could give
" you the *leaſt* Suſpicion that ever I would
" prove an *auſtere* Maſter to you, or that I
" would not be ready to conſtrue you in the
" moſt *favourable* Senſe, and to pity and par-
" don you whereſoever you were excuſable?
" Did I ever give you *any* Occaſion to think
" that I was of a *peeviſh* or *captious* Nature,
" apt to be provoked with Trifles? Yea, had
" you not all the Reaſon in the World to con-
" clude from the *Sweetneſs* of my Temper,
" that I would be always ready to conſider
" your *Infirmities*, and pity your *Weakneſſes*,
" and judge you by the Meaſures of a Friend?
" And do you now pretend that it was the
" Dread of my Severity that diſheartened you
" from my Service?" *But, Lord, the Laws which thou gaveſt us were ſo intolerably burthenſome, that neither we nor our Forefathers were able to bear them: We would willingly have obeyed thee if it had been poſſible, but when we ſaw thy Burthen exceeded our Strength, we concluded it was in vain for us to attempt the bearing it.* " *O ungratful*
" Rebels! dare you accuſe me of Tyranny,
" when you know in *your own* Conſciences I
" never impoſed any Law upon you, but what
" had a *neceſſary* Tendency to your Happineſs,
" and was ſo far in its *own* Nature from being
" a Burthen to you, that it commanded nothing
" but what would have been an Eaſe and
" Refreſhment; and if you can produce any
" *one* of my Commands that obliged you to

" any thing but to be *kind* to *yourselves*, or " convince me that I could have enjoined *less* " upon you without being *less kind* or *mer-* " *ciful* to you, I will freely admit of your Plea " as *just*, and immediately pardon all your " Disobediences against me. But when all my " Laws are Instances of my Love to you, and " Expressions of my Zeal for your Welfare, " who but such *Monsters* of Ingratitude as " yourselves would ever have charged me with " Tyranny and Oppression?" *But, Lord, thou knowest we are fickle and mutable Creatures; and though we did heartily resolve that we would never revolt from thy Service, yet through the many Temptations that perpetually sollicited us, we were at last seduced into a Rebellion against thee: And though when we reflected upon what we had done, we were full of Sorrow and Remorse, and wished from our Souls that we had never done it; yet then, being desperate of Mercy, and past all Hopes of Pardon, we concluded that it was too late to repent, or to think of returning to our Duty again.* " Ah, *unworthy* Wretches! " with what Confidence can you impute the " Continuation of your Rebellion against me " to your Despair of ever finding Mercy at " my Hands, when you know in *your own* " Consciences that I died to procure Forgive- " ness for you, and that by my Death I ob- " tained an Act of *Indemnity* and *Oblivion* for " all that would come in, and return to their " Duty upon the Proclamation of my *Gospel?* " When you cannot but know that I tendered " you your Pardon sealed with *my own* Blood,

" and

" and courted you to accept of it; and though " Time after Time you ſcornfully refuſed and " rejected it, yet in hope that at laſt you might " be prevailed with, you know how long I " waited upon you, even till you had tired out " my Patience, and I ſaw there was no Re- " medy? And do you now charge your not " returning to your Duty upon your Hopeleſ- " neſs of Pardon for your *former* Rebellions;" *It is true, Lord, we cannot deny but thou didſt offer us Pardon; but, alas, it was upon an impoſſible Condition, even upon a hearty Repentance, and a thorough Reformation, which thou kneweſt we were not then able to perform. For by a long Cuſtom of Rebellion againſt thee, we had contracted ſo many inveterate evil Habits, which had ſo weakened and debilitated our Powers, that we were no more able to reform and amend ourſelves than the Leopard is to change his Spots, or the* Æthiopian *his Skin: To what purpoſe then ſhould we attempt Impoſſibilities, or ſet ourſelves to wreſtle with Difficulties which we knew we were never able to ſurmount?* " But pray how did you know that it was " *impoſſible* for you to repent, when by all the " Arguments I uſed with you, I could never " perſwade you to make Trial of it? You know " in *your own* Conſciences that there are *many* " Things that you could do: You could have " betaken yourſelves to a *ſerious* Conſidera- " tion of the Duties and Motives of *Religion*; " you could have attended, and abſtained at " leaſt from the *outward* Acts of Sin, and " humbly implored my Grace and Aſſiſtance;

" and that to encourage you to do this, and " what elſe was in your Power, I gave you " the moſt *ample* Aſſurance in the World, that " I would *back* and *enforce* your Endeavours " with the Aids of my Grace, and in Deſpite " of all Oppoſition, crown them with Succeſs. " So that though by your own *ſingle* Strength " indeed you could never have effected your " Repentance, yet it was far from being *im-* " *poſſible* to you, ſince you know that by doing " what was in your Power, you ſhould infalli- " bly oblige me to enable you to do all the " reſt." *But, bleſſed Lord, what Encourage-ment had we to repent and return to our Duty? For if we had done it, we muſt have bid adieu for ever to all thoſe Pleaſures and De-lights by which we were invited and detained in the Service of our Luſts; and Thou offeredſt us nothing in Exchange for them, but only Sighs and Tears, with other ungrateful Ri-gours of a bitter and ſevere Repentance, How then canſt thou blame our Diſobedience againſt thee, when we had ſo many inviting Temptations to it, and ſo little Encouragement to the contrary?* " O *prodigious* Impudence! " with what Face can you aſſert ſuch a *noto-* " *rious* Falſhood, when you know in your " *own* Conſcience, that beſides all thoſe Plea- " ſures that are *connatural* to my Service, and " which do vaſtly exceed all the Pleaſures of " Sin, I laid an *immortal* Crown at your Feet, " and faithfully promiſed you, that if you " would but ſpend a *ſhort* Life in my Service, " I would at the End of it receive you into " that *bliſsful* State where you ſhould be *happy*

" beyond

" beyond all your Wiſhes, and to the *utmoſt*
" Capacity of your Nature; where you ſhould
" live with *God* and *Angels* in the moſt *raptu-*
" *rous* Exerciſe of *everlaſting* Love and Joy,
" which one would have thought had been
" *ſufficient* to recompence you for thoſe *filly*
" Pleaſures, for whoſe Sake you deſerted me
" and my Service? But ſince you have tram-
" pled upon all my Offers, and would by no
" means be perſuaded by all thoſe *mighty*
" Tenders I have made you, Go, ye deſervedly
" curſed, into ever——*Hold, Lord, we beſeech*
thee, and before thou paſſeſt thy irrevocable
Doom upon us, hear this laſt Petition we ſhall
make for ourſelves: We now confeſs that we
are fully convinced (and O that we had un-
derſtood it ſooner!) what infinite Reaſon we
had to adhere to thee and thy Service. It is
our Miſery that theſe Things were not ſooner
diſcovered to us, or at leaſt, that they were
not ſo clearly diſcovered as to convince and
perſuade us. Had we but known what we
now know, we would never have deſerted
thee as we did; and therefore we beſeech thee
have Pity upon our Ignorance, and impute not
to our Wills the Faults of our Uuderſtandings,
which are not in our Power to remedy.
" Why, is this the *Utmoſt* that you can plead
" for *yourſelves?* Have I not told you all
" theſe Things before-hand as plainly as Words
" could expreſs them? Have I not inſtituted
" an Order of Men in my *Church* to explain
" theſe Things to you, and to put you in
" Mind of them? So that whatever you pre-
" tend, you could not but know and under-

" ſtand them ; or if you did not, it was be-
" cauſe you would not. And if you would
" wilfully ſhut your Eyes againſt the Light, it
" was *your own* Fault that you did not ſee,
" and you may thank *yourſelves* for the Conſe-
" quences of it. I plainly told you where
" your Wickedneſs would end, and unleſs you
" were wilfully *blind*, you could not but ſee
" what the Event of your Sin would prove
" even while you were committing it ; and you
" know in *your own* Conſciences, that this
" *fearful* Doom, which now you deprecate,
" you were fairly warned of, when you might
" have eaſily avoided it by a *timely* Submiſ-
" ſion, but you would not. And ſeeing you
" would be ſo *mad* as to reject *Heaven* when
" it lay before you, and leap into *Hell* with
" your Eyes open, your Blood be upon *your*
" *own* Heads. For I have tried all the Arts
" of Love and Methods of Kindneſs to re-
" claim you ; and ſince you have rendered them
" all *ineffectual*, what remains but that you de-
" part from me, like *accurſed* Wretches as you
" are, into that *everlaſting* Fire prepared for the
" *Devil* and his *Angels*."

And now, I beſeech you, do not *your own* Conſciences conſent to the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of this Procedure ? Is there any *tolerable* Plea you can urge at the Judgment-Seat of *Jeſus Chriſt* which here hath not been fully anſwered ? And if ſo, how *inexcuſable* ſhall we be when we come to plead *our own* Cauſe in the *great* Aſſembly of Spirits ? For when theſe Aggravations of our Diſobedience ſhall be laid open, our Guilt will appear ſo

foul

foul and *monſtrous*, that we ſhall doubtleſs be condemned by the *unanimous* Vote of the *reaſonable* World; and as ſoon as the *great* Judge hath paſſed his Sentence upon us, *our own* Conſciences will be forced to echo, *Juſt and righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy Ways.* Wherefore, as we would not be found inexcuſably *guilty* when we come to plead for our Lives before the Tribunal of our *Saviour*, let us all be perſuaded to return to his Service, and faithfully to continue in it, that ſo, inſtead of *Go, ye Curſed*, we may hear from his Mouth that *welcome* Approbation, *Well done, good and profitable Servants, enter into the Joy of your Maſter.*

III. I come now to the *laſt* Propoſition in the Text, *viz. And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Son of the Father.* In handling of which I ſhall do theſe two Things:

1. Explain to you what this Glory of the *Word* was which the *Apoſtle* tells us they beheld.

2. Shew you that it was *the Glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father.*

1. What was the Glory of the *Word*, which the *Apoſtle* tells us they beheld? I anſwer in general, By this *Glory* here muſt be underſtood ſomething that is *reſemblant* to the Glory of his dwelling in the Tabernacle; becauſe, as I have already ſhewed you, the *Apoſtle* ſeems plainly to refer to it, in that he doth not only tell us that the *Word* tabernacled among us,

which alludes to his tabernacling among the *Jews*; but he alſo tells us, that they ſaw his Glory, which alludes to that Glory of the Lord which the *Jews* beheld in that *antient* Tabernacle. Since therefore the *Apoſtle* mentions this Glory of the *Word incarnate*, by way of Alluſion to the Glory of his *divine Preſence* in the Tabernacle, it muſt neceſſarily bear ſome Reſemblance, or Proportion to it; becauſe elſe it would be no *proper* Alluſion. The beſt Way therefore for us to diſcover what this Glory of *Chriſt* was which they beheld, is to conſider wherein the Glory of the *divine Preſence* in the Tabernacle did chiefly diſcover itſelf; and that, you ſhall find, was in theſe four Things: *Firſt*, In a *bright* and *luminous* Appearance. *Secondly*, In exerting of an *extraordinary* Power. *Thirdly*, In giving Laws and Oracles. *Fourthly*, In *ſenſible* Significations of its own *immaculate* Sanctity and Purity. And in Proportion and Correſpondence to theſe, the Glory of the *Word incarnate* alſo muſt conſiſt in theſe four Things:

1*ſt*, In the *viſible* Splendor and Brightneſs with which his Perſon was arrayed at his *Baptiſm*, and more eſpecially at his *Tranſfiguration*.

2*dly*, In thoſe *great* and *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought in the Courſe of his Miniſtry.

3*dly*, In the *incomparable* Purity and Goodneſs of his Life.

4*thly*, In the *ſurpaſſing* Excellency, and Divinity of his Doctrine.

1*ſt*, That Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* and the *Apoſtles* beheld, conſiſted in that *viſible* Splendor

Splendor and Brightneſs with which his Perſon was arrayed at his *Baptiſm*, and more eſpecially at his *Tranſfiguration*; in Reſemblance to that *viſible* Splendor and Brightneſs in which he appeared in the *Moſaick Tabernacle*, where it is frequently ſaid, that the Glory of the Lord abode and appeared; as you may ſee, *Exod.* xxiv. 16. and xl. 34. Which Glory it is evident diſcovered itſelf in an *extraordinary viſible* Splendor that ſhone from between the *Cherubims*, and diffuſed itſelf thence all over that *ſacred* Habitation. And accordingly in *Ezek.* xlii. 2. it is ſaid, that *the Glory of the God of* Iſrael *came from the Way of the Eaſt, and the Earth ſhone with his Glory*; which denotes that it was *extraordinary bright* and *luminous*, ſince the Earth ſhone with the very Reflection of it. And in this ſame *glorious* Splendor was *Chriſt* arrayed *firſt* at his *Baptiſm*, and *afterwards* at his *Tranſfiguration*. For at his Baptiſm it is ſaid, that *the Heavens were opened unto him*, and that *he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a Dove, and lighting upon him*, Mat. iii. 16; where by the *Holy Ghoſt*'s deſcending like a Dove, it is not neceſſary we ſhould underſtand his deſcending in the Shape, or Form of a Dove, but that in ſome *glorious* Form, or Appearance, he deſcended in the *ſame* Manner as a Dove deſcends; and therefore St. *Luke* expreſſes it thus; *And the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily Shape like a Dove upon him*, Luke iii. 22; that is, he deſcended in ſome very *glorious* and *viſible* Appearance, in the ſame Manner as Doves are wont to deſcend when they come down from the

the Skies, and pitch upon the Earth. But what that Shape was in which he appeared, is not here expreſſed; but that which ſeems to be moſt *probable* is this; that the *Holy Ghoſt* aſſuming a Body of Light, or ſurrounded as it were with a Guard of Angels appearing in *luminous* Forms, came down from *Above* juſt as a Dove with his Wings ſpread forth is obſerved to do, and lighted upon our Saviour's Head; and the Reaſon why I think ſo, is this; both becauſe where-ever any mention is made of God's, or the Holy Ghoſt's appearing in an *indefinite* Form, it is always in a Body of Light and *viſible* Splendor, of which I have given you ſundry Inſtances; and alſo becauſe it ſeems to have been a very *early* Tradition in the *Church*, that it was in a very *glorious* Appearance of Light that the *Holy Ghoſt* came down upon our *Saviour:* And therefore in the *Goſpel of the Nazarens*, as *Grotius* obſerves, it is ſaid, that upon the Holy Ghoſt's Deſcent, εὐθὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μεγα, *immediately a great Light ſhone round about the Place*; and *Juſtin Martyr*, ſpeaking of our Saviour's Baptiſm, ſaith expreſly, πῦρ ἀνήφθη ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, *that there was a Fire lighted in the River* Jordan; that is, the Water, immediately after he was baptized in it, ſeemed to be all on Fire by the Reflection of that *bright* and *flaming* Appearance in which the *Holy Ghoſt* deſcended upon him; ſo that while he wore this Crown of *viſible* Light, his Head, as the Painters are wont to expreſs it, was circled round with the Rays of that Glory in which he was wont to appear from between the Cherubims. And this

this Glory of his was queſtionleſs ſeen by many of the *Apoſtles*, who were *ſundry* of them Diſciples to *John the Baptiſt*, and ſo may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be preſent at the Baptiſm of our *Saviour*.

And as for his *Transfiguration* upon Mount *Tabor*, it is ſaid, that upon it, *his Face did ſhine as the Sun, and that his Raiment was white as the Light*; or as St. *Luke* expreſſes it, οἱ ἱματισμὸς αὐτῦ λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτων; that is, his Raiment was like the Whiteneſs of a Flaſh of Lightening, *Luke* ix. 29. So that from Head to Foot he was all enrobed in a *viſible* Glory, and covered with all that Brightneſs and *dazling* Splendor in which he was wont to appear in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. And accordingly you have mention made of a Cloud that overſhadowed the *three Diſciples*, whilſt *Jeſus* remained in his Transfiguration, which is exactly agreeable with that Cloud that covered the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, whilſt the Glory of the Lord filled it, as you may ſee, *Exod.* xl. 34. And that this *glorious* Transfiguration was a Part of that Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* here ſays they beheld, is evident, becauſe *himſelf* was one of the *three Diſciples* that were Eye-Witneſſes of this *glorious* Scene, and it is expreſly ſaid of him and his Brethren, that they *ſaw his Glory, and the two Men that ſtood with him*, Luke ix. 32.

2*dly*, This Glory which they ſaw conſiſted in thoſe *great* and *ſtupenous* Miracles that He wrought in the Courſe of his Miniſtry, in Proportion to that *extraordinary* Power in which the Glory of the *divine Preſence* diſcovered itſelf

itſelf in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. For thus we find that it was from the Tabernacle that God exerted all that *miraculous* Power by which he puniſhed the Rebellions of the *Jews*, and wrought thoſe *miraculous* Deliverances for them. It was from the Tabernacle that he commanded the Earth to open, and ſwallow up *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and that he ſent forth that *devouring* Fire which conſumed their *two hundred* and *fifty* Accomplices. It was from the Tabernacle that he ſmote the *falſe* Spies with the Plague, and ſent forth an Army of *fiery* Serpents to deſtroy the *murmuring* Iſraelites. It was by his Preſence in the Tabernacle that he conducted them through the Wilderneſs, and drove their Enemies before them; that he divided the River *Jordan* to open them a Paſſage into *Canaan*, and made the Wall of *Jericho* to fall flat at the Blaſts of a few *Rams-Horns*. And upon the Account of this *miraculous* Power which he exerted from the Tabernacle, the Ark that was contained in it, and was the *ſpecial* Seat of his Preſence, is called *the Ark of his Strength*, Pſal. cxxxii. 8; and God is ſaid to *ſend them Help from his Sanctuary, and to ſtrengthen them out of Sion*, where the Ark was repoſited in the Sanctuary of the Temple, *Pſal.* xx. 2. Thus alſo thoſe Words are to be underſtood, *Pſal.* lxxx. 2. *Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manaſſeh, ſtir up thy Strength, and come and help us*; becauſe the Ark, from whence God was wont to put forth his Strength in ſaving of *that* People, marched immediately before theſe *three* Tribes. And this was very well underſtood

underſtood both by the *Iſraelites* and the *Philiſtines*; for when the *Philiſtines* had overthrown them, they deſired that the Ark of the Lord might be fetched out of *Shiloh*, that ſo when it came among them it might ſave them out of the Hands of their Enemies, 1 *Sam.* iv. 3. And when the *Philiſtines* underſtood that the Ark was brought into their Camp, they were ſore afraid, and cried out, *God is come into the Camp: Woe unto us; who ſhall deliver us out of the Hands of theſe mighty Gods? Theſe are the Gods that ſmote the* Egyptians *with all the Plagues in the Wilderneſs*, v. 7, 8. From whence it is evident, that they both looked upon the Tabernacle as the Seat of God's *miraculous* Power, and this *miraculous* Power is called the Glory of God; for thus when the Ark was taken by the *Philiſtines*, it is ſaid that God *delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies Hand.* Pſal. lxxviii. 61. And his Glory, and the Miracles that he wrought from the Tabernacle in the Wilderneſs, are mentioned as *ſynonymous* Terms, *Numb.* xiv. 22. *Becauſe all theſe Men have ſeen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in* Egypt, *and in the Wilderneſs*, &c. So that it is evident, that he exerted his *miraculous* Power from the Tabernacle, and that this *miraculous* Power was his Glory.

And conſonantly hereunto, it was from the Tabernacle of *human* Nature wherein he dwelt, that the *Eternal Word* exerted that *miraculous* Power whereby he *cured* the *Sick*, *calmed* the Sea, and *raiſed* the Dead, *vanquiſhed* the Devils, and wrought all his *miraculous* Works, which

which were ſo *many* and ſo *great*, that they raviſhed his Friends with Joy to behold them, and ſtruck Terror and Amazement into his Enemies; for ſo it is ſaid, that *they were all amazed at the mighty Power of God* that was in him, *Luke* ix. 43. And that when they ſaw how the Devils trembled, and fled before him, *they marvelled*, ſaying, *It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael*, Mat. ix. 33. So that by their *own* Confeſſion, that *miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Tabernacle of *human* Nature, did far exceed that *miraculous* Power which he exerciſed in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. And this *miraculous* Power of his is alſo expreſly called *his Glory*, John ii. 11. *This Beginning of Miracles did* Jeſus *in* Cana *of* Galilee, *and manifeſted forth his Glory, and his Diſciples believed on him.* So that as his *miraculous* Power was called his Glory when he tabernacled among the *Jews*, ſo it was alſo when he tabernacled in *human* Nature, and ſo by Conſequence, this alſo was a Part of that Glory of his, which his *Apoſtles* ſaw while he dwelt among them.

3*dly*, This Glory which they ſaw conſiſted alſo in the *ſurpaſſing* Excellency and Divinity of his Doctrine, agreeably to that Expreſſion of his *glorious* Preſence in the *old Tabernacle*, *viz.* his giving Laws and Oracles to the *Iſraelites*. For thus we find that God told *Moſes*, that he would *meet him in the Tabernacle, and commune with him of all Things, which he would give him in Commandment to the Children of Iſrael*, Exod. xxv. 22; and *Numb.* vii. 89. you have the Manner of his communing with them deſcribed;

deſcribed; for when *Moſes*, ſaith he, *went into the Tabernacle, he heard the Voice of one ſpeaking unto him from off the Mercy-Seat that was upon the Ark, from between the two Cherubims.* For Chriſt, as I have formerly ſhewed you, being the *Civil* Prince or Sovereign of the *Jews*, the *Cherubims* were the Throne upon which he ſat, and from whence he gave Laws and Directions for the Adminiſtration of the Affairs of his Kingdom: And accordingly, he is ſaid to *dwell between the Cherubims*, Pſalm xcix. 1; and *to ride upon the Cherubims*, 2 Sam. xxii. 11; and the Sanctuary wherein the *Cherubims* were ſeated, is expreſly called the *Throne of the Lord*, Jerem. xvii. 12; becauſe here it was that he ſat in all his Majeſty, and gave forth his Laws and Ordinances to the Kingdom of *Iſrael*. And this was an *eminent* Expreſſion of the Glory of his Preſence among them, becauſe hereby he aſſerted his ſovereign Authority, and did publickly challenge to himſelf that Right to his *glorious* Power which from all *Eternity* was *inherent* in him: And hence the *Apoſtle* calls the giving thoſe divine Laws and Oracles a *glorious Miniſtration*, and plainly aſſerts it to bean Inſtance of the Glory of the *divine Shechinah*, or Preſence in the Tabernacle, when he grants that the *Miniſtration of Death written and engraven in Stone, was glorious*, yea, and that Miniſtration to be Glory in the Abſtract, 2 *Cor.* iii. 7, 9.

And in Correſpondence hereunto did the *divine Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Nature, give forth *divine* Laws and Oracles to the World; all which are yet remaining among us,

us, and do contain in them the Subſtance of our *holy Religion*; which being ſo *divine* and *god-like*, and altogether compoſed of the *pureſt* Laws, and moſt *heavenly* Doctrines, is a moſt proper Inſtance of that Glory of the *Eternal Word* which the Apoſtles beheld, though not with the Eyes of their Bodies, yet with thoſe of their Minds. For what can be more *glorious* in the Eye of *Reaſon*, than thoſe *illuſtrious* Diſcoveries which he hath made to us in his *Goſpel* of the *Nature* of *God*, and the *Duty* of *Man*, and the *immortal* Recompences of the World to come, in which he hath ſo far exceeded whatſoever *human* Wiſdom was able to diſcover of them, that all the *Philoſophy* that ever was *before* him muſt confeſs itſelf eclipſed and out-ſhone by him, and all the *Philoſophy* that ever *ſucceeded* him, hath been forced to derive and borrow Light from him: And accordingly we find his *Goſpel*, in which his Doctrines are contained, ſtiled by the Name of *the glorious Goſpel*, 2 Cor. iv. 4; which in Compariſon with thoſe *dark* and *confuſed* Diſcoveries which the World had formerly made, the *Apoſtle* reſembles to the firſt breaking forth of the Light out of the *rude* and *obſcure Chaos*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *For God*, ſaith he, *who commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, hath ſhined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of* Jeſus Chriſt: Where, by the *Face of* Jeſus Chriſt, the Apoſtle ſeems plainly to allude to that *divine* Glory and Luſtre with which *Moſes*'s Face ſhone when he came down from ſeeing the Glory of *God*, Exod. xxxiii. 29. So that his Meaning

Meaning is this; that as the *Children of Iſrael* with their *bodily* Eyes ſaw the Glory of *God* ſhining upon the Face of *Moſes*, ſo *they*, the *Diſciples* and *Apoſtles* of our *Saviour*, had far more clearly beheld with the Eyes of their Minds the *divine* Glory diſplayed in his Doctrine and Miniſtry.

4*thly* and *laſtly*, This Glory of the *Eternal Word* which they ſaw, conſiſted alſo in the *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life, ſemblably to that Expreſſion of his *glorious* Preſence in the *old* Tabernacle, *viz.* the *ſenſible* Significations he gave of the *immaculate* Purity and Holineſs of his Nature. For by thoſe *outward* Cleanſings of all Things and Perſons that did any ways belong to the Tabernacle, or did at any time approach it, he did openly repreſent and ſignify the Purity and Sanctity of his *own* Nature, which being infinitely *ſeparated* from all manner of *Impurity* and *Uncleanneſs*, cannot endure that any thing that is *filthy* or *impure* ſhould approach it. For thus we read that the Tabernacle itſelf, and all the *Utenſils* of it, were to be *purified* and *ſanctified* with Oil before the Entrance of the *Shechinah*, or *divine Preſence*: So alſo the *High Prieſt*, the Prieſts, and the People, were to be cleanſed and purified before they were ſuffered to approach the *holy Habitation*; and if at any time they had contracted any of thoſe *legal* Uncleanneſſes that are ſpecified in the Law of *Moſes*, they were to be excluded from the Communion of the Congregation, and from all the Exerciſes of *publick Worſhip* and Devotion, till they were cleanſed and purified

again: The Intent of all which was to ſignify to that People, how *irreconcileable* his Nature was to all Impurity and Wickedneſs, that it could not admit of the Neighbourhood of any Evil, nor dwell within any Lines of Communication with it; for this is expreſſed in the very Reaſon why theſe *Legal Purifications* are ſo ſtrictly required: *For I the Lord your God, am holy*, Levit. xix. 2. *For I the Lord which ſanctify you, am holy*, Levit. xxi. 8. Plainly intimating, that the Intent and Reaſon of all thoſe *ceremonial* Purifications, was to ſignify to that *dull* and *ſtupid* People the *immaculate* Holineſs and Purity of his *own* Nature, which is ſo infinitely removed from any thing that is *impure* and *unholy*, that he could neither communicate with, nor endure the Approaches of it. And in this, it is evident he placed a great Part of the Glory of his *majeſtical Preſence* in the Tabernacle, ſince a great Part of that *Religion* which he there inſtituted, was intended to ſignify the Glory of his Holineſs to them; and accordingly he is deſcribed to be *glorious in Holineſs*, Exod. xv. 11.

And agreeably hereunto did the *Eternal Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Natures, ſignify to the World the *unſpotted* Purity of *his* Nature, by that *incomparable* Example of Holineſs which he gave in his Life and Converſation among us. For whereas before he expreſſed his Holineſs by *myſtical* Types and *ceremonial* Obſervances, he hath now ſignified it by a Life *full* of Virtue and Goodneſs, and a Converſation exactly *conformable* to the *eternal* Rules of Righteouſneſs. For, as a Creature in

in reſpect of his *Humanity*, he never failed in the *leaſt* Punctilio of that *Duty*, *Homage* and *Devotion* which he owed to the moſt *High God*, his Creator: As a Man, he never ſwerv'd, either in his Paſſions or Appetites, from the *ſtricteſt* Rules of *Sobriety* and *Temperance*; as a Member of *human Society*, he never was guilty of an *unrighteous* Action, either towards his *Superiors*, *Inferiors*, or *Equals*; but all his Life was a *walking* Monument of Goodneſs, and his whole Converſation a moſt *perfect* Tranſcript of thoſe *divine* and *heavenly* Laws which he gave to the World. So that he was all *glorious without* as well as *within*, his Practice being a *living* Comment and Paraphraſe upon that *immaculate* Purity and Holineſs which is the Glory of his *divine* Nature. This therefore was doubtleſs a Part of that Glory which the Apoſtles beheld in the *Eternal Word*, even that *immaculate* Sanctity and Holineſs of which he gave ſo many *glorious* Significations in the whole Courſe of his Converſation: And accordingly, we find this his Purity and Holineſs deſcribed by the Name of *the Glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glaſs the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord:* Where it is plain, that by *the Glory of the Lord*, muſt be meant his Holineſs; becauſe it is into the Image of *that*, that we are tranſformed. So that the Meaning of the Words is this, we all beholding the Holineſs of *Chriſt*, which is his Glory, in the Glaſs of his Doctrine and *incomparable* Example, are transformed

into the Likeneſs of it, and do gradually paſs on from *one* Degree of this Glory of his Holineſs to *another*, under the Conduct and Aſſiſtance of the *Spirit of Chriſt*.

And ſo I have done with the *firſt* Thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you what that Glory of *Chriſt* was which the *Apoſtle* here tells us they beheld.

2. I now proceed to the *ſecond* Branch of my Diſcourſe, which was to ſhew you, that this was the Glory as of the *only begotten Son of the Father:* But before we proceed to the Proof of it, it will be *neceſſary* to explain this Phraſe, δοξαν ὡς μονογενῦς, *the Glory as of the only begotten Son.* Which Word ὡς, or *as*, is in *Scripture* taken *two* Ways, ſometimes as a Note of *Similitude*, or *Compariſon*; ſo *Mat.* vi. 10. *Thy Will be done in Earth*, ὡς ἐν ὐρανῷ, *as it is in Heaven*; that is, like as it is in *Heaven*; and if we take it in this Senſe, then the meaning of the Words muſt be this, *And we beheld his Glory which was like unto the Glory of the only begotten Son of the Father*; that is, like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son was wont to appear when he dwelt in the Tabernacle, and converſed with the *antient Patriarchs.* And in this Senſe I have ſhewed you already how it was *as* the Glory of the *only begotten Son*, by ſhewing you the *great* Agreement and Similitude there was between the Glory of *Chriſt* when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, and in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature. And when I conſider how plainly this Text doth allude to the *Shechinah*,

or

or *divine Preſence* of the *Word* in that *antient* Tabernacle, I am very much induced to think that we ought not to exclude this Senſe of it, namely, that as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature, *like* as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*; ſo that Glory of his which they beheld in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature, was like unto that Glory in which he appeared in the *antient* Tabernacle.

But then this Word ὡς, is ſometimes alſo taken for a Note of *Confirmation*; ſo *Pſalm* lxxiii. 1. ὡς ἀγαθὸς ὁ Θεὸς, *Truly God is good to* Iſrael. And thus St. *Chryſoſtome* underſtands it here, ὡς οὐκ ὁμοιώσεως ἐστὶν οὐδὲ παραβολῆς, ἀλλὰ βεβαιώσεως, &c. *It is not a Note of Similitude and Compariſon, but of Confirmation and unqueſtionable Diſtinction*; as if the *Evangeliſt* had ſaid, we ſaw his Glory, ſuch as *became*, and was *fit* for the *only begotten* and truly *natural Son of God*. For my part, I ſee no Reaſon why the Words may not be fairly underſtood in *both* Senſes, ſince they are no ways *oppoſite* to, nor *inconſiſtent* with *one another*; and if ſo, then this muſt be the Meaning of the Words; *We beheld his Glory which was like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son appeared in the old Tabernacle, and which was ſuch as was every way becoming the only begotten Son to appear in.* The *firſt* of which Senſes I have proved to you already, that the Glory of *Chriſt* in the Tabernacle of *our* Natures was *like* unto his Glory in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*; and therefore now I ſhall only prove the *ſecond*, that it was ſuch as *became*, and was every way *worthy* of the *only begotten Son of the Father*;

and this, I doubt not, will plainly appear by conſidering the *ſeveral* Particulars of it.

1*ſt*, That *viſible* Splendor and Brightneſs in which he appeared at his *Baptiſm* and *Tranſfiguration*, was ſuch as *became* him, and was *worthy* of him: For in all probability, that Splendor conſiſted of *Angelical Beings*, cloathed in *bright* and *luminous* Bodies; becauſe as I have formerly proved to you, that Brightneſs in which he appeared upon the *Mount*, and which he diſplayed from between the *Cherubims*, was nothing elſe but thoſe *Angels of Light*, or *miniſtring Spirits* which he made to appear as Flames of Fire round about him; and therefore that Train of Angels whom *Eſay* ſaw filling the Temple, *Eſay* vi. 1. our *Saviour* calls the *Glory of the Lord*, John xii. 41; that is, that *viſible* Glory in which the Lord appeared from between the *Cherubims*. And if that *viſible* Glory conſiſted in a Train of *Angels* appearing in *glorious* Forms, then there is no doubt but that *viſible* Glory of our *Saviour* at his *Baptiſm* and *Tranſfiguration* was the ſame; ſince, as I have already ſhewed you, it is deſcribed by the *ſame* Name, and in the *ſame* Manner and Appearance; and, if ſo, how well did it become the *only begotten Son* to be ſurrounded with the *illuſtrious* Guards of his Father's Court, and attended on with thoſe *high-born* Spirits, whoſe Office it is to miniſter before the Throne of the moſt *High?* For never was the moſt *glorious* Potenate upon Earth attended with ſuch a *ſplendid* Train and Retinue, the *meaneſt* of which was far more *illuſtrious* than the *greateſt* and moſt

moſt *high-born* Monarch in the World. So that as the moſt *high God* did, by a Voice from *Heaven*, both at his *Baptiſm* and *Tranſfiguration*, declare him to be his *beloved* Son; ſo by the *glorious* Train of Attendants he ſent him, he manifeſted the Truth of his Declaration; for we muſt needs ſuppoſe him to be the Son of the moſt *High*, when we ſee the moſt *glorious* Beings in all the Creation, ſo willingly ſubmit themſelves to his Service and Attendance: And when we ſee the moſt *High* adorning his *Outſide* with the *luminous* Bodies of Angels, we may reaſonably conclude that there was a *Divinity within*, and that the *Jewel* was *God*, becauſe the *Caſket* was *Angels*. But whatſoever this *glorious* Splendor was in which he was cloathed at his *Baptiſm* and *Tranſfiguration*, it was apparently ſuch as very well *became* the *only begotten Son*, not only becauſe, as the *Philoſopher* ſaith, that if *God* would ever take upon him a Body, it would be certainly Light, which is a Veſtment moſt *ſuitable* to his Glory and Majeſty; but alſo becauſe that *miraculous* Splendor was an *infallible* Token of the Preſence of the *Divinity* in him; for it never was but where God was preſent; and therefore it is called the Glory of God, it being the *inſeparable* Concomitant of his more *peculiar* Reſidence. For thus, as I have ſhewed you upon the *Mount*, and in the *Tabernacle*, it was a *viſible* Demonſtration of the *ſpecial* Preſence of the *inviſible* God, and whereſoever, in all the *Old Teſtament*, any Mention is made of its Appearance, you ſhall find that there *God* himſelf did peculiarly reſide: And there-

fore it is not to be imagined that *God* would have communicated to our *Saviour* this *inſeparable* Token of his *own* Preſence, unleſs the *Divinity* had reſided in him. For *Jeſus Chriſt* was the only Perſon upon whom this *viſible* Glory deſcended; never did the Hand of *Heaven* put forth ſuch a Robe and Diadem of Glory upon any Perſon in the World, as this which our Saviour wore at his *Baptiſm* and *Transfiguration*; which plainly denotes, that he was the only Perſon in whom the *Divinity* was *ſubſtantially* united, and did *eſſentially* dwell. So that as this *viſible* Glory was a *certain* Token of God's *peculiar* Reſidence in the Tabernacle and Temple, ſo it was alſo of his *ſpecial* Preſence in *Chriſt*; for the Hiſtory of his *Baptiſm* tells us, that it did not only make a *tranſient* Appearance, but that it remained on him, ſignifying that the *Divinity*, whoſe Preſence was denoted by it, had made him his Habitation and Place of *conſtant* Abode. For though that *viſible* Glory after ſome Time diſappeared and went *off* from him, yet the Thing ſignified by it, *viz.* the *divine Preſence*, always remained in him; for by that *outward* Glory he was clearly manifeſted to be the *Holy One of God*, the Tabernacle and Sanctuary in which God was, and where he had taken up his Reſidence *for ever*, that his *human* Nature was that *ſacred* Temple where the *Divinity* intended to dwell, and from whence for the *future* he would deliver all his Oracles, and communicate all his Bleſſings to Mankind. So that in this Reſpect this *viſible* Glory was ſuch as highly *became* the *only begotten Son*, becauſe

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it plainly denoted that the Fulneſs of the *Godhead* dwelt *bodily* in him, and had choſen him for his Habitation for ever; and therefore *John Baptiſt* tells us, that though he knew him not, yet this *God* had revealed to him, *Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt. And I ſaw and bear Record that it was the Son of God*, John 1. 33, 34. Where you may obſerve, that though it was revealed to him only that he was the Perſon that ſhould baptize with the *Holy Ghoſt*, upon whom the Spirit deſcended, yet he bare Record alſo that this Perſon was the *Son of God*, rationally concluding that this *viſible* Glory, which was ſuch an *infallible* Token of the *ſpecial* Preſence of the *Divinity*, was never to be communicated to any but the *Son of God*. And it is very obſervable, that at both theſe Times, when our *Saviour* was arrayed in this *glorious* Splendor, he is declared by a Voice from *Heaven* to be the Son of God, it being the *Father*'s Intention at once to manifeſt him to be his *Son* both by *Word* and *Deed*; and at the ſame Time, when he declared him to be his Son, to array him in ſuch a Glory as *became* the Dignity of his Perſon.

2*dly*, The *great* and *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought were ſuch as *became* his *only begotten Son*. It is true, it cannot be denied but ſeveral Miracles have been wrought by *meer* Men, they being authorized by *God*, and aſſiſted by his *Almighty* Power; but ſo *many* and ſo *great* as our *Saviour* wrought were never performed by any Mortal. For as to the Number

of

of them, they were more than ever were wrought by *Moſes* and all the *Prophets* together; for, beſides thoſe that are recorded, which were all performed within the Space of *four* Years at moſt, St. *John* tells us, that he wrought ſo many that the World could not contain the Records of them, *John* xxi. 25; which though it be an *hyperbolical* Expreſſion, yet denotes thus much at leaſt, that the Number of them was ſo *great*, that they were almoſt *innumerable*. And as to the Greatneſs of them, they did apparently exceed all that ever were wrought before in the World. For he did not only raiſe the Dead, but he raiſed *himſelf* alſo after he had been *barbarouſly* murdered by his Enemies. He made the *Winds* and *Sea* obey him, and with the Word of his Mouth vanquiſhed the *Devils*, and drove them from their Habitations, and forced them againſt their Wills and their Intereſt to acknowledge him to be the Son of God. And whereas the Miracles of *Moſes* and the *Prophets* were moſt of them *noxious*, they being Acts of *divine* Vengeance upon the *Wicked* and *Ungodly*, and conſequently more apt to terrify, than to oblige thoſe that beheld them; the Miracles of our *Saviour* were all of them Expreſſions of his *unfeigned* Love and Good-Will to the World. For among all that *vaſt* Number of wondrous Works that he wrought, there is not *one* to be found by which any Man was ever prejudiced, unleſs it was his diſmiſſing the Devils into the Swine of the *Gadarens*, which without all Doubt he did in Kindneſs and Good-Will to the Owners; who being ſo *cruel* to themſelves,

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as to prefer their Swine before their *Saviour*, it was *great* Charity and Mercy to deprive them of that which was ſo *apparent* a Hindrance to their Enjoyment of a far *greater* Good. So that all his *wondrous* Works were nothing but Acts of Kindneſs and Beneficence; for he went about doing Good, *curing* all that were *poſſeſſed* with the Devil, and *healing* all manner of Diſeaſes. And whereas none of thoſe that wrought Miracles before him could ever pretend to perform them by any *immanent* Power of their own, but had only a *tranſient* Power given them for the *preſent* Miracle, which they either obtained from *God* upon their Prayers and Supplications, or was given by *God* for the Execution of his *own* Will and Command; the *bleſſed Jeſus* had this Power ſubjected and abiding in him, ſo that he could exert it *when*, and *where*, and as *often* as he pleaſed; and whether he were *abſent* or *preſent*, with the Word of his Mouth he could do what he would: Yea, and many times he performed his *wondrous* Works without any Word or Sign intervening, even by a *ſilent* Virtue proceeding from that *miraculous* Power with which he was endued; and of all his Miracles, there is only *one* which he performed upon Prayer and Supplication to his Father, and that was his raiſing *Lazarus* from the Dead, the Reaſon of which he himſelf gives, *John* xi. 42. *Becauſe of the People which ſtand by, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me:* Intimating that he did not offer up this Prayer to his Father with Deſign to obtain of him a *new* Power of working Miracles, which he was already

already endued with in an *abundant* Meaſure; but that hereby I might ſignify to the People how *acceptable* I am to thee, and let them ſee that I do all my Works in thy Name. And that he had this Power, is evident in that he did ſo plentifully communicate it to his *Apoſtles* and Followers, which neither *Moſes* or the *Prophets* were ever able to do. For thus, *Luke* x. 19. he expreſly tells his *Seventy* Diſciples, *Behold, I give you Power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions*; and ſo alſo when he diſmiſſed his *Twelve* Apoſtles into *Judea*, *Mat.* x. 8. he bids them, *Go, heal the Sick, cleanſe the Lepers, raiſe the Dead, caſt out Devils*; for *freely you have received*, ſaith he, and therefore *freely give.* From all which it is apparent how far the *miraculous* Works of our *Saviour* did exceed all thoſe that ever were done before him; and being ſo *great* and *excellent*, ſo far *tranſcending* all that ever was done by any Mortal, they plainly demonſtrated him to be the *Son of God*, and very well became the Dignity of his Perſon: For how could he have done all theſe *mighty* Things by a Power *immanent* in himſelf, had he not been the *Son* of an *omnipotent Father?* And in what more *becoming* Way could he have expreſſed that *omnipotent* Power which he derived from his Father, than in thoſe *aſtoniſhing* Miracles of Love which he wrought in the World?

3*dly*, The *excellent* and *divine* Doctrine which he taught was ſuch as *became* the *only begotten Son.* For certainly, if we conſider the *excellent* Frame and Contrivance of the *Chriſtian Religion*, we cannot but confeſs it to be

be moſt *Divine* and *God-like*, moſt *worthy* of that *infinite* Wiſdom and Goodneſs from whence it was derived. For *Religion* in general is the Means of advancing *rational Beings* to that Perfection and Happineſs for which the *great* Creator hath deſigned and intended them; and certainly never was there any *Religion* in the World more adapted to advance this *noble* Deſign of *God*, than that which our *Saviour* hath taught: For, as for its *Agenda*, what it requires to be done, they all conſiſt in acting reaſonably, and according to the Dignity of our Nature, in *thinking*, *ſpeaking*, and *practiſing*; in *loving* and *hating*, *deſiring* and *delighting*, *hoping* and *fearing*, as becomes *reaſonable Beings*, placed in our Condition and Circumſtances; and do require nothing of us, but that we ſhould regulate our Practice by the Rules of *right* Reaſon, and direct all our Faculties and Affections to their *proper* Ends and Objects; and when we come to this Pitch, always to *think* that which is moſt *reaſonable*, and always to *practiſe* what we think ſo, then we are advanced to the *topmoſt* Round of our Perfection, in which is founded the *utmoſt* Happineſs we are capable of: So that in all the Courſe of our *Chriſtian* Practice, we are in a *direct* Progreſſion and Tendency towards our Perfection and Happineſs. And as for the *Credenda* of *Chriſtianity*, the Doctrines it requires us to believe, they are all of them pregnant with the moſt *ſtrong* and *vehement* Motives to engage us to the Practice of what it enjoins; Motives that have ſuch a *Potent*, I had almoſt ſaid *Omnipotent* Force in them, that it is *im-*

poſſible

poſſible for any Man heartily to believe, and throughly to weigh and conſider them, and not be effectually perſuaded by them. Since therefore it was ſo highly convenient that the *Son of God* in Perſon ſhould come down from *Heaven* among us, that ſo the Dignity of his Perſon might give Authority to that *Religion* by which the World was to be governed; and ſince he did come down upon this *honourable* Errand, it was impoſſible for him to have taught any Doctrine that could more effectually have promoted the *great* End of *Religion*, or more fully expreſſed his *infinite* Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Zeal for the Welfare of the Souls of Men, than that which is contained in the *Chriſtian Religion*, which is every Way ſo adapted to make Men *good* and *happy*, ſo accommodated to the Nature and Condition of Mankind, that there is nothing could better *become* the *only begotten Son* to teach in the World, or that could be more *worthy* of all thoſe *infinite* Perfections that are lodged in his Nature, and do ſpeak him to be the moſt *genuine* Offspring of the moſt *High*. For ſo *excellent* was his Doctrine, that his very Enemies were aſtoniſhed at the *Wiſdom* that was given him, *Mark* vi. 2, 3. and wondered at the *gracious* Words that proceeded out of his Mouth, *Luke* iv. 22. Well therefore might he ſay of himſelf, *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the Light of Life*, John viii. 12.

4thly and *laſtly*, The *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life was ſuch as very *well became*

became the *only begotten Son.* For as it was highly *convenient* that he ſhould come down into the World, and in his *own* Perſon teach us that *Religion* by which he intended to govern us, that thereby he might ſtamp it with a more *aweful* Authority; ſo to render it more ſucceſsful, it was no leſs *convenient* that he ſhould come down in *our* Natures, that therein he might be capable of practiſing what he taught us, and ſetting us an Example of what he would have us to do, that ſo we might ſee that he enjoined nothing upon us but what was *practicable*, and what did become the moſt *glorious* Perſon, that ever did aſſume our Natures; that thereby we might be encouraged to our Duty, and animated with a *noble* Emulation of treading in his bleſſed Footſteps. Since therefore all this was ſo highly *convenient*, and the *Son of God* in Compliance with this Convenience did actually aſſume *our* Nature, it was impoſſible for him to lead a Life that *better* comported with this Deſign of his *Incarnation*, or *better* became the Dignity and Excellency of his Perſon than he did. For now that he was become a Man, he was obliged to act *ſuitably* to his Nature; and ſhould he have done any thing that was *unſuitable* to the State and Circumſtances of his Nature, he would not have acted becoming himſelf. So that it was highly *convenient* that he ſhould become a Man, and being a Man, it was indiſpenſably *neceſſary* that he ſhould live like a *wiſe* and a *good* Man in the Condition and Relations wherein he was placed, and nothing could be more *worthy* of, or *becoming* him, than

than ſo to do, though he was ſtill the *only begotten Son* of the Father. For it is the Glory of *God* himſelf, that he always acts moſt reaſonably according to the State and Relations of a *God*; and therefore when *God* becomes Man by aſſuming *our* Nature to his *own*, it is his Glory to act moſt reaſonably in the State and Relations of a Man. And thus did the *bleſſed Jeſus* do in the whole Courſe of his Converſation upon Earth; for his Life was a moſt *exact* Pattern of all *human* Virtues, in which all that is *ornamental* to *human* Nature was repreſented in its *faireſt* Colours: There you may ſee a *fair* Example of the moſt *ardent* Love to, and *conſtant* Dependance upon *God*, of the moſt *profound* Humility, and *perfect* Reſignation to his *heavenly* Will. There you may behold the Moderation of *human* Paſſions and Appetites ſet forth to the Life, and fairly delineated in its moſt *exquiſite* Perfections; in a Word, there you will find *Loyalty* and *Submiſſion* to *Superiors*, *Fidelity* and *Juſtice* to *Equals*, *Courteſy* and *Candour*, and *Condeſcenſion* to *Inferiors*, *univerſal* Love, and an *unbounded* Charity to all, practiſed to the Height and Exactneſs; and which Way ſoever you turn your Eyes on this *fair* Monument of Virtues, you can diſcover nothing but what is *lovely* and *adorable*, and infinitely becoming the *only begotten Son of the Father*.

Having thus explained and demonſtrated the Propoſition to you, I ſhall conclude with theſe four Inferences from this *fourfold* Glory of the *Word* which they ſaw.

I.

1. They saw the *glorious* Splendor which invested his Person at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration:* From whence I infer his Deputation from the most *High God*, and Father of all Things, to be his Representative and Viceroy in the *Christian Church.* For this *visible* Glory with which he was invested, was always the *peculiar* Character of the *immediate* Representative of *God*; and therefore by Way of Approbation it is called the *Glory of God*, and *the Glory of the Lord*; and whersoever *God*, as *supreme* Monarch and Governor, is represented as residing and taking up his *Royal* Habitation, there you always find him displaying himself in this *visible* Glory and Splendor. Thus, when by the *Eternal Word* he was represented among the *Jews* as their *supreme* Lord and Governor, he always manifested his *majestic* Presence among them by some *bright* and *shining* Appearance; the first Instance of which was his Appearance to *Moses* from out of the *burning Bush* upon Mount *Sinai*, where he first acted, under *God* the *Father*, as *Sovereign* King of *Israel*, in commissioning *Moses* to be their Captain and Leader out of *Egypt*; for here it is said, that he *appeared in a Flame of Fire.* Exod. iii. 2. That is, in a *visible* Glory that resembled the Brightness of a Flame of Fire. For this Mountain he had chosen for the Seat and Throne of his *majestical* Residence, from whence he intended to give Laws to *Israel*, and to exert his *Royal* Dominion over them; and therefore here he appears in that *visible* Glory which was always the Character of the

divine King, and *immediate* Representative of *God* to that People. And indeed if that be true which *Josephus* tells us, this Mountain was looked upon as the Habitation of *God* long before ever *Moses* came thither; for therefore, says *Josephus*, did *Moses* drive his Father *Jethro*'s Flock thither to feed, because of all other Places it most abounded with Pasture, * διὰ τὸ δύξαν ἔχειν ἐν διατρίβειν αὐτῷ τὸν Θεὸν ὃ καταναμηθείσης πρότιρον, ὃ τολμώντων ἐμβατεύειν εἰς αὐτὸ τῶν ποιμένων; that is, *because it was famed that God dwelt there, which was the Reason that the Shepherds never durst to drive their Flocks thither, because of the Sacredness of the Place.* And if this Report were true, then it seems this Mountain was the Seat of the *Royal* Residence of the *Eternal Word* before ever *Moses* came thither, and consequently the Glory and Brightness in which *Moses* saw him appear, was nothing but the Display of his *Majestic* Presence which did there make its *ordinary* Abode. But whether that be *true* or *false*, it is most *plain* and *apparent*, that wheresoever he appeared as the King of *Israel*, or Representative of *God* to them, he always cloathed himself in a *visible* Glory and Splendor. Thus he appeared to them, in a Pillar of Fire, that is, in a most *bright* and *luminous* Form, when he conducted them through the *Red Sea*, and the Wilderness; and when he came down upon Mount *Sinai* to give the Law to them, it is said that the Glory in which they beheld him was *like devouring Fire.* Exod. xxiv. 17. That is, it was unspeakably *bright* and *refulgent*, even

* Jos. Antiq. l. 2. p. 60.

even like that of a moſt *intenſe* and *vehement* Fire; and in all this *radiant* Glory did he diſplay himſelf from between the Cherubims when he removed from the Mountain, and choſe the Tabernacle for the Seat of his *future* Reſidence and *Royal* Abode. Thus whereſoever he appeared in his *Kingly* Majeſty as the *publick* Repreſentative of his Father, this *viſible* Glory is always made mention of, as that which was the *peculiar* Character of his Preſence and Perſon. It is true, it is recorded of *Moſes*, that when he came down from the Viſion upon the Mount, his Face ſhone ſo brightly that the *Iſraelites* were not able to approach him; which ſeems to argue that this *viſible* Glory was not ſo *peculiar* to the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Repreſentative, as we would have it, ſince we plainly ſee it was *common* to *Moſes* with him. But this doth no Ways deſtroy our Aſſertion; becauſe it is plain that *that* Glory which covered the Face of *Moſes*, was all derived from the Glory of the *Eternal Word*, with whom for *forty* Days he had converſed in the Mount. For *Moſes* being ſent down as an Apoſtle to the *Jews*, to promulgate thoſe Laws to them which he had received upon the Mount, the *Eternal Word*, to convince the *unbelieving Jews* that he had ſent him, reflects upon his Face ſome Rays of Glory from that Sphere of Light in which he appeared to, and converſed with him, that *that* might be an *ocular* Demonſtration to them, that *Moſes* came from him, and was commiſſioned by him to preach and promulgate his Laws to them. So that *Moſes* his Glory being derived

from the *Word*, declared him to be his Apoſtle and Miniſter; even as the Glory of the *Word* being derived from the Father, declared him to be his Repreſentative and Viceroy; ſo that from its ſhining upon the Face of *Moſes*, it by no Means follows that this *viſible* Glory is not the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Repreſentative; becauſe that which ſhone upon his Face was only the *Parhelius*, or Reflection of the *viſible* Glory of him who was God's *immediate* Repreſentative. For ſo the Earth alſo is ſaid to *ſhine with the Glory of the God of Iſrael.* Ezek. xliii. 2. And as the Glory with which it ſhone was not the Glory of the Earth, but the Glory of the *God of Iſrael*; ſo neither was that Glory upon the Face of *Moſes* the Glory of *Moſes*, but the Glory of that *divine* Perſon with whom he had converſed, derived to, and reflected upon him; and it being ſtill the *proper* Glory of that *divine* Perſon, may very well be ſaid to be the *peculiar* Characters of his being the *immediate* Repreſentative of *God*, notwithſtanding it reflected from him upon *Moſes*; eſpecially conſidering that this *reflected* Glory upon *Moſes* his Face was to be an Evidence to the *Jews*, that he came down to them as an Apoſtle from the *Eternal Word*, with Authority to publiſh and declare his Laws to them. For if this *derivative Splendor* was an Evidence that *Moſes* came down as an Apoſtle from that *divine* Perſon on the Mount, then the *original* Splendor of that *divine* Perſon whence it was derived and reflected, was at leaſt an *equal* Evidence that he came down upon the Mount

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as the Apoſtle, and *immediate* Repreſentative of the moſt *high God* himſelf.

And in the ſame Manner we find that the *Word Incarnate* did give Evidence to the Commiſſion of his *Chriſtian Apoſtles*; for upon the *Day of Pentecoſt*, when they were aſſembled together, it is ſaid, *that there appeared unto them cloven Tongues like as of Fire, and ſat upon every one of them*, Acts ii. 3. That is, there were ſeveral Flaſhes, or Beams of Glory, which, like *bright* Flames of Fire, did cleave aſunder in many Places according to the *natural* Motion of Flames, of which every Part, as it extends itſelf in Length, grows more *Spire-like*, or *Pyramidal*, and ſo divides from the Part next to it; and upon the Head of every one of the Apoſtles, did one of theſe *divided* Flames of Glory reſt in the Form of a Tongue, which, like a Flame, grows *ſharper* and *ſharper* towards the Top: For thus the *Hebrew Idiom* for a Flame of Fire uſes the *Tongue* of Fire, becauſe of the Reſemblance that is between them, *Iſa.* v. 24. So that, as the *Eternal Word* did evidence to the *Jews* the Apoſtleſhip of *Moſes* by that *viſible* Glory which he reflected on his Face, ſo did the *Word Incarnate* evidence to the *Chriſtian Church* the Apoſtleſhip of the *Twelve* by this *viſible* Glory which he derived upon them. For now, according to *John* the *Baptiſt's* Prediction of him, he baptized them *with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire*, Luke iii. 16. That is, by the *outward* Sign of that *viſible* Glory which reſted like Fire upon them, he ſolemnly initiated them into their *Apoſtleſhip*, and de-

clared them to be the *Heralds* of his Will to the World. And as this *viſibly* Glory with which he baptized them, was an Evidence of their being ſent *from*, and commiſſionated by *him* to bear his Authority, and repreſent his Perſon; ſo that *viſible* Glory with which he was baptized from *Heaven*, firſt in the River *Jordan*, and afterwards upon Mount *Tabor*, was an *undoubted* Evidence that he was ſent from *Above* to be his Father's Repreſentative in the *Church*: For if their ſhining with his Glory was an Evidence of their being inveſted with his Authority, then his ſhining with his Father's Glory muſt be an *equal* Evidence of his being inveſted with the Authority of his Father. And as this *viſible* Glory was always the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Repreſentative, and the *royal* Crown and Robes, as it were, with which the moſt *High* adorned him at his *Inauguration*, and Inveſtment with his *own kingly* Authority: ſo St. *Peter* expreſly tells *Cornelius* and his Company, that *God had anointed him with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Power*, Acts x. 13; that is, by that *outward* Sign of the *viſible* Glory in which the *Holy Ghoſt* deſcended upon him, he had inveſted him with *regal* Power, and deputed and declared him to be King of the *Church*. And this, in all Probability, was the Reaſon why he forbad his Diſciples to declare his Transfiguration till after his *Reſurrection from the Dead*, Mark ix. 9. becauſe he knew that if they did, the *Jews* would not believe it, but would malicioufly interpret it to be a *falſe* Pretence of his to the Title of God's *immediate* Repreſentative

tative and Viceroy, that *visible* Glory in which he appeared being the *proper* Character of that *divine* King by whom the most *high God* had formerly governed them; and therefore in all the History of his Life you find he did industriously avoid openly to avow his *regal* Authority, and only insinuates it by Consequences and *obscure* Intimations. For so violently were they prejudiced against his being their *King*, upon the Account of his *obscure* Parentage, and *mean* Condition, that he could not but foresee how *unseasonable* it would yet be publickly to own his *regal* Authority, and consequently the Glory of his Transfiguration which did so apparently infer it; till by more *miraculous* Effects, and particularly by his *Resurrection from the Dead*, he had sufficiently proved and demonstrated it; and then he openly declares, without any Reserve, that *all Power was given him in Heaven and Earth*. Matt. xxviii. 18. Since therefore it is so apparent by this *characteristical* Glory, in which his Person was enrobed, and which the *Apostle* assures us they saw him invested with, we have all the Reason in the World to conclude, that the most *high God* hath deputed him to be King and Lord of the *Church*. For when the *Apostle* tells us that they saw this *visible* Glory which shone upon him at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, he doth as good as say, that they saw all the Solemnity of his *divine* Coronation, that they beheld the most *high God* circling his Brows with the *royal* Diadem, and investing his *sacred* Body with the *imperial* Robes of the *great* King of the World. So that if it

be true what St. *John* ſays, that they did ſee this Glory, (as we have all the Reaſon in the World to conclude it is, becauſe he offered to ſeal his Teſtimony of it with his Blood, and the other *two* that ſaw it with him actually did ſo) then we cannot but acknowledge the *bleſſed Jeſus* to be *our* King, to whoſe *divine* Authority we are bound to pay the *loweſt* Homage and Obedience; and that whenſoever we wilfully tranſgreſs his Laws, we do openly rebel againſt our moſt *rightful* Sovereign, to whoſe Service we are bound by all *poſſible* Ties and Obligations.

2. They ſaw the Glory of that *miraculous* Power, which he exerted in the Courſe of his Miniſtry; from whence I infer the Credibility of the *Chriſtian Religion:* For the many *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought, were a moſt *plain* and *unqueſtionable* Evidence of a *divine* Power, reſiding in him, and accompanying his Miniſtry. For never were there ſo many *miraculous* Effects produced, either *before* or *ſince*, in the World, by the moſt *renowned* Workers of Miracles that ever were; and all that hath been done by the moſt *famous* Magicians, that are recorded in Hiſtory, were but like the *little* Tricks and Deluſions of *Jugglers*, compared with the *wondrous* Works of our *Saviour*; and yet it is apparent that his Education had been moſt *plain* and *ſimple*, that he never had been inſtructed in any *mathematical* Science, or *myſtical* Rights, or in any *other* Art of performing Wonders, either by *human* Wit, or *diabolical* Aſſiſtance; but was bred up under the Care of his *poor honeſt* Parents,

Parents, who were forced to earn their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows, and ſo in all Probability was trained up in his Father's Profeſſion, that ſo by his *daily* Labour he might be able to contribute to the Charge of his Maintenance. And yet it is plain, this *home-bred* Perſon ſometimes, only by ſpeaking of a Word, ſometimes merely by the Touch of his Hand, ſometimes by a *ſilent* Virtue proceeding from him without any *outward* Sign intervening, did *more*, and far *greater* Wonders in *three* or *four* Years Time, than all the moſt *ſkilful Phyſicians*, *Magicians*, and *Mathematicians* could ever do, either *before* or *after* him. Now how was it poſſible that ſuch a Perſon ſhould ever have accompliſhed ſuch *great* and *mighty* Things as he did, had he not been endued with Power from above? And if he was endued with ſuch a Power, what *greater* Evidence can we deſire of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine? For it is not *ſuppoſable* that the *God* of Truth would have endued our *Saviour* with this *miraculous* Power, had that Doctrine been falſe which he ſought to confirm by it; becauſe in ſo doing he would have openly *patronized* a Cheat, and deſignedly contributed to the Propagation of an Impoſture, which is utterly *inconſiſtent* with his Truth and Veracity: So that now the Truth of *Chriſtianity* finally reſolves into the Veracity of *God*, which is the Foundation of all the Certainty in the World. For admitting that *God* can either *deceive*, or be *deceived*, we do not know but our Faculties may be conſtantly impoſed upon, and then there is nothing in Nature that we

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can be certain of. So that if it be true, as St. *John* here teſtifies, that they did ſee the Glory of our Saviour's Miracles, that is a moſt *undeniable* Evidence of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine; and that they did ſee it, I think is as evident: For it is not imaginable that any *ſingle* Man would openly teſtify a *known* Lye without ſome Temptation inducing him thereunto; much leſs that ſo many *Hundreds* of Perſons as the *Eye-Witneſſes* of our Saviour's Miracles were, ſhould conſpire to cheat the World, not only when they had *no* Temptation to it, but when they had *all* the Reaſon in the World againſt it; for they ſaw their Maſter ſuffer a *ſhameful* Death before their Eyes, by which they might eaſily divine what their *own* Fate would be if they perſevered to preach up his Miracles and Doctrine, which they could not reſolve to do without bidding adieu to all their *temporal* Hopes, and engaging themſelves to undergo all the Miſeries and Calamities in the World; and if they teſtified what they knew to be *falſe*, they tranſgreſſed the Rule of their *own* Religion, and thereby forfeited all their Hopes of a *bleſſed* Immortality in the Life to come. And can it be imagined that ſo many Men ſhould at the *ſame* Time ſo unanimouſly agree to report and teſtify the Miracles of a Man whom they had lately ſeen crucified before their Eyes, when they knew in their *own* Conſciences, that it was all a *mere* Forgery, and could not but foreſee, that by perſiſting in it, they ſhould incur an *inevitable* Ruin in this Life, and an *eternal* Damnation in the Life to come? Was there

there ever ſuch a *deſperate* Piece of Madneſs heard of from the Beginning of the World to this Day? And yet this *monſtrous* Thing, which is by a *thouſand* times more *incredible* than any thing in the *Chriſtian Religion*, we muſt not only imagine may *be*, but believe that it really *was*; or elſe confeſs that St. *John* ſays true here, that they did ſee the Glory of his Miracles, which is ſo *undoubted* an Evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine. Wherefore ſince we are compaſſed about with ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes, let us by a *lively* and *vigorous* Faith adhere to the Truth of our *holy Religion*, and then we ſhall find it *quick* and *mighty* through *God*, to the caſting down the ſtrong Holds of our *vicious* Habits, and implanting in us all thoſe *divine* Diſpoſitions, which are neceſſary to qualify us for thoſe *endleſs* Joys which our *bleſſed Lord* hath promiſed to, and prepared for us.

3. They ſaw the Glory of that *divine* and *incomparable* Doctrine which he taught: From whence I infer the Unreaſonableneſs of Mens entertaining *mean* and *contemptible* Opinions of the *Chriſtian Faith*, ſince it is ſo *excellent* in itſelf that it was a Glory to the Son of God to be the Author of it. We have a Sort of Men among us who would fain be accounted the *Wits* and *Virtuoſo's* of the Age, who pretend to acknowledge a *God*, and a *Providence*, and all the Principles of *natural Religion*, and yet openly profeſs a very *mean* and *contemptible* Opinion of *Chriſtianity*, and take all Occaſions to repreſent it as a *ridiculous* Fiction, fit only to be impoſed upon the *credulous* Vulgar.

Vulgar. But I would fain know of theſe *mighty Men of Reaſon*, what *plauſible* Pretence they can urge for this their *bold* and *blaſphemous* Cenſure? Is it becauſe *Chriſtianity* is a *revealed Religion?* Or, becauſe there is any thing in it that is *unworthy* of *God*, whom we pretend to be a Revealer of it? Or, becauſe there wants *credible* Evidence of its being revealed by him? If they pretend to reject it becauſe it is a *revealed Religion*, I would beſeech them to conſider how it could have comported with the Goodneſs of *God* never to make any Revelation of his Will to the World, when the Generality of Men were loſt in ſuch a *Midnight* of Ignorance in reſpect of *natural Religion*; how even the *natural* Notions of the *Deity* were corrupted into all manner of Follies and Vanities, and Men had formed Religions not only *hateful* to *God*, but *naufeous* to all that were *wiſe* among themſelves; and how defective alſo they were in the *beſt* and *pureſt* Precepts of *Morality*, having at laſt conſecrated their Vices, and enthroned them among the Graces of *Religion:* In which *miſerable* State of Things, it is ſo far from being *unreaſonable* to expect a Revelation, that it is hardly *poſſible* to vindicate God's Goodneſs without ſuppoſing it. For ſhould he have *for ever* left Mankind in this *bewildered* State without Revelation, he would have been more wanting to Man, who is the *nobleſt* of all his *earthly* Creatures, than he is to the moſt *contemptible* Animal; for to his *meaneſt* Creatures he hath given *ſufficient* Ability to attain the *higheſt* End of their Beings, which Mankind can hardly be ſuppoſed to have

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in his *corrupt degenerate* State, without ſuppoſing a *new* Revelation from *Heaven*. For we have an *innate* Notion within us of a *ſupreme Being* above us, that is ſuperlatively *good*, and endued with all *poſſible* Perfection; our *natural* Reaſon dictates to us, that to converſe with, and enjoy him *for ever*, is the *higheſt* Good that we are capable of, and the moſt *ſuitable* to our *rational* Natures; but by what means we may be reconciled to him in this State of Revolt whereinto we are fallen, and how at length we may arrive to the Enjoyment of him, could never have been ſufficiently made known to us in this *Maze* of Ignorance wherein we were involved, without ſome *divine* Revelation: And therefore to ſuppoſe Revelation *unreaſonable* in our *miſerable* State and Circumſtances, is to ſuppoſe it *unreaſonable* for the *great* and *good* Governor of the World to furniſh his *nobleſt* Creature *Man* with *ſufficient* means to obtain his moſt *excellent* End. And if it be acknowledged that there is a Revelation, becauſe it is ſo highly *reaſonable* that there ſhould be, let us conſider which of all the Religions in the World, that pretends to be from *God*, is moſt likely to be the Revelation of his Will, and then I doubt not if we impartially compare them, but our Reaſon will ſoon give its Vote for *Chriſtianity*. If you enquire for this Revelation of the *Enthuſiaſtick Poets* of the *Heathen*, how *wild* and *extravagant* is that *Religion*, which we find in the *Theology* of *Heſiod*, the *Hymns* of *Orpheus*, the *Odes* of *Pindar*, and the *Poems* of *Homer*, *Virgil*, and *Ovid?* If you conſult the *Heathen Oracles*

Oracles of *Delphos*, *Dodona*, and *Jupiter Hammon*, how *vain* and *frivolous*, how *uncertain* and *fallacious*, are all their Responses? Besides that, the Books and Records of them are long since perished and consumed. If you enquire for this Revelation in the *Old Roman Theology*, which *Numa* pretended to receive from his Goddess *Egeria*, that also is lost, being burned by the *Roman Senate*, as *Valerius Maximus* tells us; for that it contained many Things in it not only destructive to the Gods and Religions of other Countries, but also to his *own* and the *Roman* Profession: Or shall we confront *Christianity* with the *Alchoran* of *Mahomet*, which he often pretends to have received from God? There we shall find every Page almost abounding with *monstrous* Cheats and Impostures, the Whole being nothing else but a *confused* Medley of *impious* and *contemptible* Fopperies, heaped together by a *Triumvirate* of *Arians*, *Jews* and *Pagans*, who were all of them *known* Impostors in the Ages wherein they lived: So that to confront *Christianity*, with any of these, is to light up a *Rush-Candle* and resolve to out-face the Sun with it. For as for *Christianity*, it is a *Religion* made up of the most *divine* and *Godlike* Institutions; its Precepts being such as are most *worthy* of God, enjoining nothing but what is either *true* Godliness, and most *generous* Morality, or what are the most *efficacious* Means and Instruments of promoting them. And as for its Doctrine, it partly consists of those Principles of *natural Religion* which all wise Men, of whatsoever Nation or Religion, have owned and

and acknowledged, ſuch as the *Exiſtence*, *Unity*, and *Providence* of the *Godhead*, the *Immortality of the Soul*, and the *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* of *another Life*, together with the *great Day* of Accounts, wherein Men ſhall receive according to what they have done in the Fleſh: And even the Doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*, which is the *profoundeſt* Myſtery of all our *Religion*, hath been owned and profeſſed by the *greateſt* and moſt *famous Philoſophers* that ever were. And as for thoſe Doctrines that are purely *Chriſtian*, ſuch as the *Birth*, and *Life*, and *Death*, the *Reſurrection* and *Aſcenſion* of our *Saviour*, together with his Sitting on the *Right Hand of God* and coming at the *laſt* Day to judge the World, they are all of them ſo excellently contrived to ſerve the *great* Ends of *Religion*, ſo wonderfully *pregnant* with Motives and Arguments to engage Men to the *greateſt* Purity and Goodneſs, that by their *own native* Beauty and *excellent* Contrivance, they manifeſt themſelves to be the Products of a *divine* Wiſdom. So that there can be no *reaſonable* Pretence to contemn *Chriſtianity*, either becauſe it is a *revealed Religion*, or becauſe it contains any thing in it that is any ways *unworthy* of the Revealer: And that there wants not *ſufficient* Evidence to demonſtrate it to be the Revelation of God, I have already proved in the former Inference. So that after all the *leud* Talk of theſe confident Men, it is apparent there is not the *leaſt* Colour or Reaſon for their *impious* Cenſures of *Chriſtianity*. But alas! it is evident that the Founda-

Foundation of their Quarrel againſt it lies not ſo much in their Reaſon, as their Luſts. *Chriſtianity* lays them under *ſevere* Reſtraints, and will not permit them to be *wicked* in quiet, which provokes them to arm their Wit, and the *little* Reaſon that they have, againſt it; that ſo having baffled, or rather laughed themſelves out of their *Religion*, they may be left at Liberty to play the Fools and Madmen without Controul or Diſturbance. And I make no doubt, but if inſtead of that *ſtrict* Piety and Virtue which *Chriſtianity* enjoins, it had but indulged to them the Liberties of the *Heathen* Religion, ſo that they could have but acted all their Wickedneſs with Devotion, ſacrificed to the Gods in *drunken* Bowls, and worſhipped in the Arms of a *Strumpet*, there are no Men in the World would have been more *zealous Chriſtians* than they. But let no Man be ſo *fooliſh* as to imagine that he can alter the Nature of Things by laughing at them, or, that *Chriſtianity* will ceaſe to be *true* in Compliance with our *wicked* Intereſt and Deſires; no, no, Things will be as they are in deſpite of us, and howſoever we will pleaſe to fancy them. And if after all our *rude* Contempts of *Religion*, it be found to be *true*, as I doubt not but it will, we ſhall be *ſenſible* when it is *too* late that it had been more for our Safety to have played before the Mouth of a *Cannon* while it is ſpitting Fire, or to have catched hold of a *Thunderbolt* as it comes roaring down from the Clouds, than to have played with *Religion*, and made it the Subject of our *impious* Scorns and Buffooneries.

4. and

4. and *laſtly*, They ſaw the Glory of his *immaculate* Holineſs and Purity: From whence I infer, that Holineſs and *true* Goodneſs is the *greateſt* Glory and Honour to *human* Nature. For this was the Glory of the *Son of God* himſelf when he aſſumed our Nature, and dwelt among us; and there is nothing more *glorious* in *Chriſt* than his Goodneſs; and notwithſtanding thoſe *excellent* Doctrines that he preached, thoſe *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought, and that *viſible* Splendor in which he was inrobed, he had not deſerved the Name of a *great* and *glorious* Man if he had not been *juſt* and *charitable*, *temperate*, and *humble*, and *Heavenly-minded* and *eminent* in all thoſe *divine* and *human* Virtues, which are the *proper* Glory and Ornament of *human* Nature. For that which makes a Man more *honourable* than a *mere* Animal, and advances us into the *next* Degree of Beings to Angels, is our Reaſon, by which alone we border upon the Divinity, and do claim Kindred with the *angelical* Natures. That therefore which is truly our Honour and Glory, conſiſts in living according to that Reaſon by which we are advanced above all *ſublunary* Natures; that is, in governing our *Paſſions* and *Appetites*, *Words*, and *Actions*, according to thoſe *eternal* Rules of Righteouſneſs which *right* Reaſon dictates to us; and if inſtead of doing thus, we wholly reſign up ourſelves to the Dominion of our *brutiſh* and *unreaſonable* Inclinations, we thereby render ourſelves more *deſpicable* and *infamous* than the moſt *beaſtly* Brutes in all the Creation, and even thoſe *Goats*, and *Wolves*, and *Swine*, and *Tygers*, whom we re-

ſemble in our *beaſtly* Manners, could they ſee our Shame, would doubtleſly hiſs at us, and reproach us for *greater* Beaſts than themſelves; for they all live *up* to the *beſt* of their Natures, and regularly purſue the *higheſt* End for which they were created; whereas we, who are allied to the *nobleſt* of Beings, and are created and deſigned for the moſt *glorious* Ends, do by our *baſe* and *unreaſonable* Condeſcenſions ſhamefully undervalue ourſelves in purſuing no Ends but what are extremely *unworthy* of us: So that it had been much more for our Honour and Reputation to have aſſumed the Shape and Nature of Brutes, when we aſſumed their Manners and Cuſtoms: for then our Actions would have very well become us, and neither *God* nor *Man* could have juſtly upbraided us for them. But to lead the Lives of *Brutes* in the Shape and Nature of *Men*, is *monſtrous*; it is to advance the *Beaſt* above the *Man*, to place our *Heels* where Nature hath placed our *Head*, and become our own *Reverſe* and *Antipodes*.

OF

OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life.

BY the *Scriptures* here muſt be meant the *Old Teſtament*; for as yet the *greateſt* Part of the *New* was *unrevealed*, and the *whole* of it *unwritten*. They were thoſe very *Scriptures* which the *unbelieving Jews*, to whom our *Saviour* was now preaching, owned and acknowledged to be the Word of God; *for in them*, ſays our Saviour, *ye think ye have eternal Life*; which it is certain they did not *think* of any *other Scriptures* but only thoſe of the *Old Teſtament*; *and they are they*, ſays he, *which teſtify of me*. And to be ſure there were no *other Scriptures* which could teſtify of *Chriſt* to the *unbelieving Jews*, but only thoſe of *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, theſe being the only *Scriptures* whoſe Teſtimony they credited. But yet the Reaſon which our *Saviour* urges to

move them to read the *Old Teſtament*, doth as much oblige us to read the *New* as well as the *Old*, as it did them to read the *Old*; *for in them ye think ye have eternal Life*; that is, in them ye think ye have *eternal Life* promiſed, and all the Neceſſaries to be believed and done by you, in order to your obtaining it, propoſed to you. And indeed as they thought, ſo it was; they had *eternal Life* propoſed to them in *Hieroglyphicks*; for *that* was the Myſtery of their *Holy of Holies*, *that* was the Interpretation of their Land of *Canaan*, and the *ſpiritual* Senſe of all their *general* Promiſes of *good* Things to come: They had all the Articles of Faith, and all the Inſtances of Duty that were *neceſſary* to their Attainment of *eternal Life* exhibited to them in the Writings of their Prophets, and the Types and Figures of their Law. For it was by this Rule alone that all the *holy* Men of the *Jewiſh Nation* did live and believe; and either this was *ſufficient* to guide and direct them to *eternal Life*, or they were left under a *fatal* Neceſſity of falling ſhort of it: It was the *Law of the Lord* that did *enlighten their Eyes*, *and rejoice their Hearts*, *and convert their Souls*; and it was *in keeping it* that they found *great Reward*, Pſalm xix. 7, 8, 11. And therefore either they fell ſhort of the Reward of *eternal Life* notwithſtanding this their Illumination and Converſion, or they found it in keeping that Law by which they were illuminated and converted; and if in keeping their Law they found *eternal* Life, then it is certain that in their Law *they* had it. So that theſe Words of our *Saviour* (*for in them ye think ye hav-*

have eternal Life) do not imply that they were miſtaken in thinking ſo, or at leaſt they only imply that they were miſtaken in thinking to obtain *eternal Life* by adhering to the *prime* and *literal* Senſe of their Law, without purſuing the Myſtery and *ſpiritual* Meaning of it; which was indeed the Error of the *Phariſees*, with whom our *Saviour* is here diſcourſing. For the *internal* Senſe and Myſtery of their Law was the *Goſpel*, all whoſe Articles of Faith, and Precepts of Duty, were (though darkly and obſcurely) expreſſed and repreſented in the Types and Figures of the *Moſaic* Inſtitution. And hence the Apoſtle tells, that both the *Prieſts* and their *Oblations did ſerve unto the Example and Shadow of heavenly Things*. Heb. viii. 5. So that the *heavenly Things* contained in the *Goſpel* were the *ſubſtantial* Ideas which thoſe *legal* Types and Patterns contained and repreſented; and the ſame Author calls that Law *a Shadow of good Things to come*, Heb. x. 1; that is, when an *obſcure* Scheme of Prefiguration of the Mercies of the *Goſpel*, of which *eternal* Life is a *principal* Part. Since therefore the Law was nothing elſe but only the *Goſpel* in *dark* and *obſcure* Cyphers, if in *this* we *Chriſtians* have *eternal Life*, in *that* the *Jews* had it alſo: And therefore the Reaſon which our *Saviour* here urges to oblige the *Jews* to *ſearch the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament*, (*for in them ye think ye have eternal Life*) doth at leaſt equally oblige us *Chriſtians* to ſearch the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New*. For if they had *juſt* Reaſon to think they had *eternal Life* in the *Old Teſtament*; and were

thereupon obliged to search into it, we have rather *more* Reason to think that we have *eternal Life* in the *New*, since the *New Testament* is nothing else but only the *Old* decyphered and unriddled; and therefore we must not only have *eternal Life* in *this*, as they had in *that*, but we must also have it far more expressly than they. In the Prosecution of this Argument therefore, I shall endeavour these *Two* Things:

I. To shew you that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life*.

II. That this is a very *forcible* Reason to oblige us to search them.

I. First, that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life*; that is, that in them we have *eternal Life* proposed to us, together with all that is *necessary* to be believed and practised by us in Order to our obtaining it; or in other Words, that the *Holy Scripture* is a *sufficient* Rule, both of Faith and Manners, to guide and direct us to *eternal* Happiness. And this is *one* Article of the Faith of the *Church of England*, which we are required to explain to the People; for so in her sixth Article *our Church* professes, *that the Holy Scripture containeth all Things necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thence, is not required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation.* Now to make the *Scripture* a *sufficient* Rule as to all Things *necessary* to Salvation, there are *two* Things necessary; *First*, That it should

ſhould be *full*; and *Secondly*, That it ſhould be clear; both which the *Holy Scripture* is in an *eminent* Degree, as containing in it all that is *neceſſary* to be believed, and done in order to *eternal Life*. And this will evidently appear from theſe three following Propoſitions:

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inſpired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*.

2. That they preached to the World all thoſe *Neceſſaries* with which the *Holy Spirit* inſpired them.

3. That all thoſe *neceſſary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in thoſe *ſacred* Writings of theirs of which the *Holy Scripture* conſiſts.

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inſpired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*. For *firſt*, our *Saviour*, by whom they were originally inſtructed, declares, that as the *Father loved him, and ſhewed him all Things that himſelf did*, John v. 20. ſo *he had made known to them all Things that he had heard of his Father*, John xvii. 8. And then when he went from them, and ceaſed to inſtruct them in his *own* Perſon, he promiſed that by his *Spirit* he would *teach them all Things, and bring all Things to their Remembrance whatſoever he had ſaid unto them*, John xiv. 26; and that by the ſame *Spirit* he would *guide them into all Truth*. John xvi. 13. If therefore the *Spirit* did perform this Promiſe to them, (as there is no Doubt but he did) then

we are ſure that he did teach them over again whatſoever *Chriſt* had taught them before, and if *Chriſt* had taught them whatſoever he had heard of his Father, (as he declares he had) then it is certain either that he taught them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*, or that he himſelf had not heard from his Father all Things that are neceſſary thereunto.

2. That as they were taught by the Spirit all Things *neceſſary to eternal Life*, ſo what they were taught, they preached and delivered to the World. For ſo our *Saviour* commanded them to go forth into all the World, and *teach all Nations to obſerve all* thoſe *Things which he had commanded them.* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Which Injunction of his they ſtrictly obſerved; for ſo we are told, that in Obedience to it, *they went forth, and preached every where.* Mark xvi. 20. And that their preaching extended to all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation, is evident from their *own* Teſtimony: For thus St. *Paul* tells the *Epheſians*, that he had not *ſhunned to declare unto them the whole Counſel of God.* Acts xx. 27. And to be ſure in the *whole* Counſel of *God*, all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation muſt be included. And concerning *that Goſpel* which he had preached to the *Corinthians*, he thus pronounces; *By which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unleſs ye have believed in vain.* 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2. But how could they be ſaved by that *Goſpel* he preached to them, unleſs it contained in it all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation? And this very *Goſpel* which the Apoſtles in their *conſtant* Miniſtry propoſed

propoſed to the World, St. *James* calls the *engrafted Word, which is able to ſave our Souls.* James i. 21. And for the ſame Reaſon it is alſo called the *Word of Reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 19; The *Word of Salvation*, Acts xiii. 26; And the *Word of Life*, Acts v. 20; And the *Saviour of Life unto Life*, 2 Cor. ii. 16; And alſo *the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believes*, Rom. i. 17. Neither of which it could be juſtly ſtiled, ſuppoſing it to be *defective* in any thing *neceſſary* to the *eternal* Happineſs of Men.

3*dly* and *laſtly*, That all thoſe *neceſſary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in thoſe Writings of theirs, of which the *Holy Scripture* conſiſts. It is true, before the *Chriſtian* Doctrine was collected into thoſe *Scriptures* of which the *New Teſtament* now conſiſts, it was all conveyed by *oral Tradition* from the Mouths of the Teachers, to the Ears of the Diſciples; but in a *little* Time thoſe *holy* Men who firſt preached it, found an *abſolute* Neceſſity of committing it to Writing, as a much *ſurer* Way of preſerving it *uncorrupted*, and tranſmitting it down to all *ſucceeding* Generations; for thus *Euſebius* tells us, * *That the* Romans *not being ſatisfied with St.* Peter's *preaching of Chriſtianity to them, earneſtly deſired St.* Mark, *his Companion, that he would leave them in Writing, a ſtanding Monument of that Doctrine which St.* Peter *had delivered to them by Word of Mouth, which was the Occaſion*, ſays he, *of the writing of St.* Mark's *Goſpel: Which Thing*

* Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. ii, c. xv.

Thing St. Peter *understanding by a Revelation of the Spirit, being highly pleased with their earnest Desire, he confirmed it by his own Authority, that it might afterwards be read in the Churches.* It seems in those Days the *Romans* did not think *oral*, or *unwritten Traditions*, a *sufficient* Conservatory of *divine* Truths, nor did their *Bishops* then forbid the reading of the *Scriptures* to the Laity in their *own* Language. After which he tells us *, that *St.* Matthew *and St.* John *were the only Disciples of our Lord, who had left written Commentaries of the Things which they had preached behind them; and it was*, says he, *Necessity that impelled them to write. For* Matthew *having preached the Faith to the* Hebrews, *and intending to go from them to other Nations, wrote his Gospel in his own Country Language, that thereby he might supply the Want of his Presence to those whom he left behind him. And afterwards when* Mark *and* Luke *had published their Gospels*, John, *who had hitherto only preached the Gospel by Word of Mouth, being at length moved by the same Reason, betook himself to write. And the three former Gospels*, says he, *arriving to the Knowledge of all Men, and particularly of St.* John, *he approved them, and with his own Testimony confirmed the Truth of them.* From which Relation it is evident, that *that* which moved those *holy* Men to commit their *Gospels* to Writing, was this; that they judged it *necessary* for the Conservation of the *Christian* Doctrine, that so these

* Lib. iii. c. xxiv.

theſe in their Abſence might be *ſtanding* Monuments of the Faith, to preach that *Goſpel* to Mens Eyes which they had preached to their Ears: And if they wrote to preſerve the Faith, to be ſure they would leave no *neceſſary* or *eſſential* Part of it unwritten. There are ſeveral Propoſitions in theſe *Goſpels*, which, though very *uſeful*, are far from being *eſſential* Parts of *Chriſtianity*; and can we imagine that thoſe *holy* Men who wrote on purpoſe to conſerve *Chriſtianity*, ſhould take ſo much care to write many Things which are not *neceſſary* Parts, and in the mean time omit any Things that are? *Euſebius* tells us of St, *Mark* in particular, ἐνὸς γὰρ ἐποιήσατο πρόνοιαν τοῦ μηδὲν ὧν ἤκουσε παρ᾽ ἀλιπεῖν ἢ ψεύσασθαι τι ἐν αὐτοῖς; i. e. *he took great Care of this more eſpecially, not to pretermit any of thoſe Things which he had heard,* even from St. *Peter) nor to affix any thing to them that was falſe:* And if he were ſo *careful* not to omit any thing, to be ſure he would be particularly careful not to omit any thing which he judged *neceſſary* to the *eternal* Happineſs of Men. But what need we depend upon *human* Authority, when as, if we conſult thoſe *ſacred* Writings themſelves, (which ſo far as they go, all *Chriſtians* allow to be the *Word of God)* we ſhall find they give this Teſtimony of themſelves, that they comprehend in them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal* Life. For thus the Writers of the *New Teſtament* teſtify of the *Old, That they are able to make us wiſe unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Jeſus Chriſt.* 2 Tim. iii. 15. And if the *Old Teſtament* alone was able to do this, then

then much more the *Old* and *New* together; but how could they make Men *wiſe to Salvation*, if they were *defective* in any Article that is *neceſſary* to Salvation? And then the ſame Author goes on and tells us, that *all Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works*; ver. 16, 17. And if the *Old Scriptures* were *ſufficient* to make the Man of God *perfect*, and to furniſh him throughly unto all *good* Works, one would think that the *New* and *Old* together ſhould not be *defective*. For that the *Scriptures* of the *New Teſtament*, as well as of the *Old*, contain in them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*, they themſelves do plainly teſtify of themſelves: For thus St. *Luke* in the Beginning of his *Goſpel* tells his *Theophilus*, to whom he writes, that *foraſmuch as many had ſet forth a Declaration of thoſe Things that were ſurely believed among Chriſtians, it ſeemed good unto him alſo, having had a perfect Underſtanding of all Things from the firſt, to write them down, in order that he might know the Certainty of thoſe Things wherein he had been inſtructed:* From whence I infer, that ſuppoſing St. *Luke* performed what he promiſed, his *Goſpel* muſt contain a *full* Declaration of the *Chriſtian Religion:* For, *Firſt*, by promiſing to give an Account of thoſe Things which were ſurely believed among *Chriſtians*, he engaged himſelf to give an *entire* Account of *Chriſtianity*, unleſs we will ſuppoſe that there

there were ſome Parts of *Chriſtianity* which the *Chriſtians* of that Time did not ſurely believe. *Secondly*, In promiſing to give an Account of thoſe Things of which he had a *perfect* Underſtanding from the firſt, and in which his *Theophilus* had been inſtructed, he alſo engages himſelf to give a *complete* Account of the whole *Religion*, unleſs we will ſuppoſe that there were ſome Parts of this *Religion* which St. *Luke* did not perfectly underſtand, and in which *Theophilus* had not been before inſtructed. Thus alſo St. *John* teſtifies of his *Goſpel*, Chap. xx. 31. *Theſe Things are written, that ye might believe that* Jeſus *is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.* And if it be objected, that by *theſe Things* the Apoſtle only means the Miracles of *Chriſt*, which are the Motives of our Belief, and not his Doctrines which are to be believed by us; this is notoriouſly *falſe*, ſince by *theſe Things* St. *John* means his *Goſpel*, in which not only the Miracles, but the Doctrines of *Chriſt* are contained; and therefore in his firſt Epiſtle, Chap. v. 13. he ſaith, *Theſe Things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that you may know that ye have eternal Life, and that ye may believe*, or continue to believe *on the Name of the Son of God*; where by *theſe Things*, it is plain he means only the *Chriſtian* Doctrine, which he had been teaching throughout the whole Epiſtle. From which *two* Places I argue, that *all* Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life* are written, becauſe he expreſly tells us, that *theſe Things* were written to this End,

End, that they might beget and nouriſh in us that Faith by which we may obtain *eternal Life*; but if that Faith which theſe *written* Things were deſigned to beget in us, be not *ſufficient* to *eternal Life*, then were theſe Things written in vain, and the End of writing them, which was that we might obtain *eternal Life*, by believing them, was wholly fruſtrated; but if that Faith was *ſufficient* to *eternal Life*, then theſe *written* Things which begot that Faith, and were the Object of it, muſt contain in them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*; for how can they beget in us a Faith that is *ſufficient to eternal Life*, unleſs they propoſe to our Faith all Things that are *neceſſary* thereunto?

And thus I have endeavoured to demonſtrate from *Scripture* itſelf, which all agree is the *Word of God*, and conſequently the moſt *concluding* Authority in the World, that the *Holy Scripture* is in itſelf a *ſufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to direct Men to *eternal Life*. And if this be ſo, I would fain know by what Warrant, or Authority, any Man, or *Church*, can pretend to obtrude upon the Faith of *Chriſtians* any *unwritten Traditions*, or Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Worſhip, not *recorded* in *Scripture*, as of *equal* Authority with thoſe *recorded* in *Scripture*, and equally *neceſſary* to the *eternal* Happineſs of Men. For that there have been ſuch *bold* Impoſers in the *Chriſtian* World, *Irenæus* aſſures us in the 2d Chapter of his 2d Book againſt *Hereſies*; where he tells us of a Sort of *Hereticks* who taught, that *the Truth could not be found*

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in the Scriptures by thoſe to whom Tradition was unknown; foraſmuch as it was not delivered by Writing, but by Word of Mouth. And theſe Hereticks, * as *Tertullian* obſerves, *confeſſed indeed that the Apoſtles were ignorant, and that they did not at all differ among themſelves in their Preaching, but ſaid they revealed not all Things unto all Men; ſome Things they taught openly, and to all, ſome Things ſecretly, and to a few*; which *ſecret* Things were the *unwritten Traditions* which they ſought to impoſe upon the Faith of *Chriſtians.* And how far the *Church of Rome* itſelf doth in this Matter tread in the Footſteps of theſe *antient Hereticks*, is but *too notorious:* For thus in the Preface of their *Catechiſm* it is expreſly affirmed by the *Council of* Trent, that *the whole Doctrine to be delivered to the Faithful, is contained in the Word of God, which Word of God is diſtributed into Scripture and Tradition.* And in the *Council* itſelf they declare, and define, that *the Books of Scripture and unwritten Traditions are to be received and honoured with equal pious Affection and Reverence:* In which Words they expreſly own *another* Word of God beſides the *Scripture*, *viz. Tradition*, which they *equalize* with the *Scripture* itſelf. And this is almoſt *verbatim* the very Aſſertion which both *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* condemn for *Hereſy*; and as they are the ſame, ſo we find they are grounded on the ſame Authority: For thoſe very Texts of *Scripture*, which thoſe *antient* Hereticks urged for their *Tradition*, are

* De Præſcrip. Hæret. c. xxv.

are urged by *Bellarmin* for the *Tradition* of his *Church*. Thus for their *Tradition*, as *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* acquaints us, they urged that of St. *Paul*, *We ſpeak Wiſdom among them that are perfect*; and alſo, *O* Timothy, *keep that which is committed to thy Truſt*; and again, *That good Thing which is committed to thee, keep:* All which Texts are urged by *Bellarmin* in his 4th and 5th Books *De Verbo Dei*, in Behalf of that *Tradition* which the *Church* of Rome contends for: And it is ſomething hard that *that* which was damned for *Hereſy* in the *primitive Church*, ſhould be made an *Article of Faith* in the *preſent Roman*. Not that we do diſallow of *Traditions* univerſally received in all *Churches* and Ages; for we frankly acknowledge that what is now contained in *Scripture* was *Tradition* before it was *Scripture*, as being *firſt* delivered by Word of Mouth before it was collected into Writing; and therefore whenſoever it can be made evident to us that there are any *unwritten* Doctrines bearing the ſame Stamp of *divine* Authority with thoſe that are *written*, we are ready to receive them with the ſame Veneration as we do the *Scriptures* themſelves. For it is not their being written that doth *authorize* them, but their being from *God* and our *Saviour*, and his *Apoſtles*; and therefore when once it is made appear to us that *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles* taught *ſo* and *ſo*, that is *ſufficient* to command our Aſſent and Submiſſion, whether it be made appear from *Scripture* or *Tradition*. So that the Reaſon why we may embrace *ſome* Doctrines and reject others, it is not merely becauſe the

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one are written, and the *other* not; but becauſe to us, who live at ſo *great* a Diſtance from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, it can never be made ſo evident, that what is not *written* was taught by them, as what is. What is *written* hath been delivered down to us by the *unanimous Tradition* and Teſtimony of the *Church* of *Chriſt* in all Ages, which I am ſure can never be juſtly pretended of any *one* of thoſe *unwritten Traditions*, which the *Church* of *Rome* now impoſes upon the Faith of *Chriſtians*. Let them but produce the ſame *unanimous* Teſtimony, that any one of theſe *twelve Articles* which they have thought meet to ſuperadd to the *antient Creeds*, was taught by *Chriſt*, or his *Apoſtles*, as we do that what is contained in *Scripture* was ſo, and we will as readily embrace it as any Propoſition in *Scripture*; but if *this* Article be neither to be found in *Scripture*, nor delivered down to us as taught by *Chriſt*, or his *Apoſtles*, by the *unanimous* Teſtimony of the *Church* of *Chriſt* through all Ages, we muſt crave their Pardon if we cannot receive it as Part of the *Word of God*. But how *impoſſible* it is to prove by the *unanimous* Teſtimony of the *Church*, that any *unwritten* Doctrine is Part of the *Word of God neceſſary* to be believed by all *Chriſtians*, is evident from hence, becauſe for *ſeveral* Ages after our *Saviour* the *Church* unanimouſly taught, that whatſoever was *neceſſary* to be believed was contained in *Scripture*; and for the ſame *Church* at the ſame Time to teſtify that *this* or *that unwritten* Doctrine is a Part of God's *Word neceſſary* to be believed, and

yet that all Doctrines *neceſſary* to be believed are *written*, is plainly to contradict itſelf. And yet we find the *primitive Fathers* unanimouſly atteſting that the *Scripture* is the Rule from whence we draw all the Aſſertions of our Faith, the *laſt* Will and Teſtimony of our *Saviour*, by which all Controverſies are to be decided, the Boundaries of the *Church*, out of which it is not to depart, the Touchſtone of Truth, the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith for the Time to come, and the only certain Principle of *Chriſtian* Doctrine and Demonſtration in Matters of Faith. Theſe are their *own* Expreſſions, and abundance more than theſe we meet with to the ſame Purpoſe; and which is very obſervable, they not only aſſert the *Scripture* to be a *full* and *adequate* Rule of Faith, but ſeverely declaim againſt all Additions to it. Thus *Euſebius Pamphilus* in the Name of the *Fathers* of the *Council of Nice*, τοῖς γεγραμμένοις πιστεύε τὰ μὴ γεγραμμένα μὴ ἐνοίει μηδὲ ζήτει, i. e. *thoſe Things which are written, believe; thoſe Things which are not written, neither think upon, nor enquire after.* Thus alſo St. *Auſtin*, *Quicquid inde audieritis è Scriptura ſacra, hoc vobis bene ſapiat; quicquid extra eſt, reſpuite, ne erretis in nebula: Whatſoever ye hear from the Holy Scripture, let it ſavour well with you; whatſoever is without them, refuſe, leſt ye wander in a Cloud.* St. *Bazil* declares, that *it is a manifeſt falling from the Faith, and an Argument of Arrogancy, either to reject any Point of thoſe Things that are written, or to bring in any of thoſe which are not written; and that it*

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is the Property of a faithful Man to be fully perſuaded of the Truth of thoſe Things that are delivered in the Holy Scripture, and not to dare either to reject or add to any Thing thereunto. Thus *Tertullian* adverſ. Hermog. *Si enim non eſt ſcriptum, timeat Væ illud adjicientibus aut detrahentibus deſtinatum : If what he pretends be not written, let him fear that Woe that is denounced againſt ſuch as add, or take away.* What Likelihood therefore is there that they who thus ſeverely forbid adding any thing to the *written Word of God*, did ever ſo much as dream of *another Word of God* conſiſting of *unwritten Traditions?* And indeed methinks it is very ſtrange if there had been any *other Word of God* beſides what is *written*, there ſhould be no Notice taken of it in that which is *written*; eſpecially conſidering that if it be as *neceſſary* to be believed as the *Roman Church* defines it, it is as *neceſſary* that we ſhould have Direction where to find it, and how to know it when we have it; but of this we have not the *leaſt* Intimation in *Scripture*. For as for thoſe Words of St. *Paul*, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 15. *Hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word, or our Epiſtle*, all that can be juſtly inferred from them is only this, that the *Theſſalonians* at the writing of this Epiſtle, had only an *oral Tradition* of a *great* Part of that *Goſpel* which St. *Paul* had preached to them, the Goſpels being as yet either not collected into Writing, or not diſperſed abroad into the Churches; ſo that then *this*, and his *former* Epiſtle to them, were perhaps the only *written* Part of the

New Teſtament that was yet arrived to their Hands; and if ſo, then this Command of *holding the Traditions by Word*, did oblige no longer than till they had received the *written Goſpel*; becauſe then thoſe *Traditions* by Word were all recorded in *Scripture*, and being there recorded, they were henceforth obliged to hold them as *Scripture*, and no longer as *Traditions* by Word. But ſuppoſing there are ſtill *unwritten Traditions* in the Church that are not in *Scripture*, but yet were delivered by *Chriſt*, or his *Apoſtles*, and ſo are equally the *Word of God* with the *Scripture*; I would fain know how we who live at ſo *great* a Diſtance from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, ſhould either know where to find, or be aſſured, that they are ſuch when we have them. We know very well that even in the *Primitive* Ages there were ſundry *counterfeit Traditions*, which *Hereticks* pretended to derive from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*; and if it were ſo *eaſy* a Matter to counterfeit *Tradition* then, how much more *eaſy* is it now? I confeſs *Vincentius Lirinenſis* gives us a very *good* Rule how to diſtinguiſh *counterfeit* from *true Traditions*; *Quod ubique, quod ſemper, quod ab omnibus creditum eſt, hoc eſt vere proprieque Catholicum: That which was every where, and always, and by all Chriſtians believed, that is truly and properly Catholick.* And by this Rule we are willing to abide; if they can ſhew us any Article of *Chriſtianity* not recorded in *Scripture*, which hath been every where, and always believed by all *Chriſtians*, we will readily admit it as an *unwritten Word of God*, and with the ſame Reſpect

Reſpect and Reverence as we do that which is *written:* But this we are fully aſſured they will never be able to perform, ſeeing, as was ſhewn before, the *Primitive Church* doth with *one* Conſent atteſt the *Scripture* to be an *entire* Rule of Faith, in which all the Articles of *Chriſtianity* are contained.

But we are told that for theſe *unwritten Traditions* we muſt rely upon the *preſent Church* of every Age, and receive as a *divine* Tradition whatſoever ſhe defines to be ſo; where by the *preſent Church* is meant the *preſent Roman Church*; that is to ſay, whatſoever *this Church* defines, we muſt believe it, becauſe ſhe defines it; which we cannot but think is a *hard* Caſe: *Firſt*, Becauſe we know very well that the *Roman Church* is at *beſt* but a Part of the *Church univerſal*, and we know no Right that any *Part* hath to impoſe upon the *Whole*, and to oblige it to believe whatſoever ſhe propoſes, merely becauſe ſhe propoſes it. *Secondly*, Becauſe in Fact we are very well aſſured that the *Roman Church* is ſo far from being a *ſincere* Preſerver of *Tradition*, that there is no *Church* in the World hath more ſtudiouſly attempted to counterfeit and deprave it; of which *innumerable* Inſtances are given by our Authors, many of which are now acknowledged even by their Authors to be *true*. For even their *vulgar Latin Edition* of the *Bible* itſelf, which they prefer before the *Originals*, is confeſſed by themſelves to abound with *manifeſt* Errors and Corruptions; and even to the very *Canon* of the *Bible* they have added *ſundry Apocryphal Books*, which we

certainly know the *Primitive Tradition* never admitted as Parts of the *sacred Scripture*; and it is notorious to all the World how many Books and Writings they have forged, and how many of the Writings of the *Antients* they have *gelded* and *interpolated*, to defend and support those *pretended Traditions* which they have imposed upon the World as Articles of Faith. And after she hath been guilty of so many *apparent* Falsifications, we cannot but think it a very *hard* Case that we should still be obliged to believe her upon her own *bare* Word. For in the *third* Place, at this Rate of Proceeding we must, in many Instances, condemn the *Traditions* of the *Primitive Church* in Compliment to those of the *present Roman* which, if we believe *our own* Eyes, and the most *authentick* Histories and Records of those Times, do expressly thwart and contradict *one another*; and since, if we would never so fain, we can never believe both Parts of a Contradiction; we must in believing the *one* give the Lye to the *other*. Nay, *Fourthly*, and *lastly*, though we should be persuaded, as we think we have Reason to be, that many of the *Traditions* of the present *Church of Rome* are not only not mentioned in *Scripture*, but directly contrary to it; (as for Instance, their performing *Divine Service* in an *unknown* Tongue, which we think is as *contrary* to 1 *Cor* xiv. as *one* Proposition can be to *another*:) yet if that *Church*'s Definitions do by their *own* Authority oblige our Faith, we must believe her against *Scripture* itself. And this we think *intolerable*, that any *Church*, or *Christian*, should

ſhould be obliged to believe the *unwritten Word* of the *Church of Rome* in a Matter wherein, upon the moſt *diligent* and *impartial* Search, they are verily perſuaded it contradicts the *written Word of God*, and if the Sentence of the *one* or the *other* muſt be made *void*, we think it is very *reaſonable* that the Voice of her *pretended unwritten Word* ſhould be ſilenced by that more *certain* one of the *lively Oracles of God*. But after all, if what I have endeavoured to prove be proved, *viz.* that the *Holy Scriptures* are a *ſufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to conduct us to *eternal Life*, this will be enough to evacuate all that is pretended for this *unwritten Word of God*. For *God* and Nature we know do nothing in vain; and therefore *if one Word of God* be *ſufficient*, *viz.* that which is *written*, what Need have we of this *other* which is *unwritten?* And ſo I have done with the *firſt neceſſary* Property of a Rule of Faith, *viz.* that it be *full*; and ſhewn at large that the *Holy Scripture* is ſo as to all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation; and therefore ſhall now proceed to,

II. The *Second*, *viz.* That it be *clear* and *intelligible* to thoſe whoſe Faith and Manners are to be regulated by it.

I do not mean, when I ſay that the *Scripture* is *clear*, and *plain*, and *intelligible* to all thoſe to whom it is a Rule of Faith and Manners, that it is throughout ſo in all its Propoſals; for it cannot be denied but there are many Things not only in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, but alſo in *other* Parts of *Scripture hard to*

be underſtood; and ſuch as do not only exceed the Apprehenſion of *common* Capacities, but alſo puzzle the Underſtandings of the moſt *acute* and *profound* Enquirers. But that which I aſſert is this; That all thoſe Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Manners which are *neceſſary* for Men to believe and practiſe, in order to their Attainment of *eternal* Life, are ſo plainly and clearly revealed in *Scripture*, that there is no *honeſt teachable* Mind that is *capable* of underſtanding *common* Senſe, but may from thence receive *full* Information of them upon *faithful* and *diligent* Enquiry. And though in *ſome* Texts theſe *Neceſſaries* are not ſo plainly propoſed as in *others*, yet in *ſome* Text or *other* they are all of them ſo plainly propoſed, that no Man can read the *Scripture*, and ſtill be *ignorant* of them, without being wilfully *blind*; for which there is no Remedy either in the Scripture, or *out* of it. And this I ſhall endeavour to prove,

1. From the *expreſs* Teſtimony of *Scripture*.
2. From the *avowed* Deſign of writing the *Scripture*.
3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture*.
4. From the Obligation that lies upon us under Pain of Damnation to believe, and receive all thoſe *Neceſſaries* to Salvation contained in it.

1. From the *expreſs* Teſtimony of *Scripture* it is evident, that in all things *neceſſary* to Salvation, at leaſt, the *Scripture* is *clear* and *plain*. For to be ſure if in any thing the *Scripture*

Scripture be *plain*, it is in thoſe Things that are moſt *neceſſary* to be believed and known; and therefore if it be *obſcure* in theſe Things, we may reaſonable preſume it is *plain* in nothing: But that it is in many Things plain and eaſy to be underſtood, is evident from its *own* Teſtimony: For thus of the *Moſaic* Law it is expreſly affirmed by *Moſes*, *This Commandment which I command thee this Day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.* Deut. xxx. 11. Where *Moſes* ſpeaks not only of the *Ten Commandments*, which conſiſting for the moſt part of Laws of Nature, are upon that Account more *eaſy* to be underſtood; but of all the Commandments of *Moſes* in general, whether *Ceremonial*, *Judicial*, or *Natural*. For ſo, *ver.* 16. *This Commandment*, we find, contains as well the Statutes and Judgments, as the Commandments of the Law, all which muſt take in the whole *Moſaic* Inſtitution. And accordingly, *Pſal.* cxix. 105. *David* calls this *Word of God, a Lamp unto his Feet, and a Light unto his Path*; which how could it be if it did not burn *clear* enough to guide and direct him? And if it did, then to be ſure it burned clear enough to direct him in thoſe Things wherein it was moſt *neceſſary* for him to be directed. Again, in *Pſal.* xix. *v.* 7. 8. we are told, that *the Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple*; and that *the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the Eyes.* But how can any Law make the *ſimple wiſe*, or enlighten the Eyes of Men, unleſs it be ſo plainly and clearly delivered, as that the *ſimple* may be capable of apprehending

ing, and the Eyes of Men of diſcerning the Senſe of it? I know it is objected by *Bellarmin*, that theſe Words do only imply, that this Law indeed being underſtood, doth enlighten Mens Eyes, and direct their Practice; but by no Means that it is *plain* and *eaſy* to be underſtood. But this is a meer Cavil; for it is plain that it is by underſtanding the Law, that the *ſimple* are made *wiſe*, and the Eyes of Men enlightened. If therefore this Law be ſo *obſcure* in itſelf, as that it cannot make itſelf underſtood by all that ſincerely enquire into it, how is it *poſſible* that it ſhould make them *wiſe*, or enlighten the Eyes of their Minds? But it is plain that the Intent of thoſe Paſſages of *David* was to excite, and encourage Men to ſtudy and obſerve the Law: But what though the Law makes the *ſimple wiſe*, when they underſtand it; what Encouragement is this for the *ſimple* to ſtudy it, if it be ſo *obſcure* that they cannot underſtand it? And ſince they muſt underſtand it before they can obſerve it, what Encouragement doth this Conſideration give them to obſerve it, that it will make them *wiſe* when they underſtand it, if it be not plain enough for them to underſtand it? But then that foreſighted Paſſage of *Moſes* doth in *expreſs* Words contradict this Cavil of *Bellarmin*; for he tells the People, that *the Commandment he gave them was not hidden from them*; whereas, if it had been ſo obſcurely delivered to them by *Moſes*, that upon their *ſincere* and *diligent* Enquiry they could not underſtand it, it is certain that it had been ſtill hidden from them, how *wiſe* ſoever it might make them when they

they did underſtand it: And to ſay that ſuch a Propoſition will make me *wiſe* when I do underſtand it, is no Argument at all that it is not hidden from me, if it be ſo obſcurely expreſſed, as that upon my *ſincere* Enquiry I am not capable of underſtanding it. But that the *Old Teſtament*, at leaſt in all *neceſſary* Matters, was *plain* enough, even to *common* Capacities, is evident from the *frequent* Appeals our *Saviour* makes to it in his Conteſts with the *common People of the Jews.* Thus in the Text he bids them *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which teſtify of me*; and *in other* Places, *What ſaith the Scripture?* And *doth not the Scripture* ſay ſo and ſo? Now how *impertinent* would it have been for our *Saviour* thus to appeal to it at the Tribunal of the People, if he thought it ſo *obſcure* that the People were not *capable* of underſtanding it? How *trifling* would it be for a Man to appeal to *Suarez*'s *Metaphyſicks* in a Controverſy with a *Plowman*, or to refer him to *Euclid's Elements* for the determining the Bounds and Meaſures of a Field?

And as from what hath been ſaid, it is apparent that the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament* were at leaſt in all Neceſſaries *plain* and *clear* to the *Jews*; ſo it is no *leſs* evident that the *Scriptures* of the *New Teſtament* are ſo to *Chriſtians*, ſince it gives the ſame Teſtimony to itſelf of its *own* Clearneſs, as the *Old Teſtament* doth. For thus, 2 *Cor.* iv. 2, 3, 4. the Apoſtle tells us, that they did not *handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifeſtation of the Truth, commending themſelves to Men's* Con-

Conſciences in the Sight of God. But if our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them. Suppoſing then that they wrote with the ſame Plainneſs and Clearneſs with which they ſpake, (which there is no Shadow of Reaſon to doubt of) then from theſe Words it is evident, *Firſt*, That they did neither in their Preaching nor Writings affect to diſcourſe dubiouſly, or obſcurely, but that their *great* Deſign was ſo to manifeſt and make known the Truth, as that by their Plainneſs and Simplicity they might recommend themſelves to the Conſciences of all that heard, or read them. *Secondly*, That in Fact they had in their Sermons and Writings ſo clearly taught the *Goſpel*, that if after all it remained *hidden*, or obſcure to any, it was only to ſuch as were *loſt* and *irrecoverable*. *Thirdly*, That *that* which rendered the *Goſpel* which they had taught and written, *hidden* or *obſcure* to ſuch, was not the Obſcurity either of the Matter which they taught, or of their Manner of teaching it, but their own *worldly* Affections which blinded their Eyes, and hindered them from ſeeing that which in itſelf was illuſtriouſly *viſible*. Which is an *unanſwerable* Evidence of the Clearneſs and Plainneſs of the Scriptures of the *New Teſtament* in all *neceſſary* Things; for if they are *clear* to all but ſuch as wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt them, they are as *clear* as they need be to *honeſt* and *teachable* Minds; for there is nothing can be

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clear enough to ſuch as are not willing to underſtand. And accordingly the *Goſpel*, which the Apoſtle calls *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*, is ſaid to have *appeared*, or ſhone forth, *to all Men*; *teaching us*, *that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts*, *we ſhould live ſoberly*, *righteouſly*, *and godly in this preſent World*, Tit. ii. 11. Now if the *Goſpel* did ſhine forth unto all Men, it muſt be in the *Sermons* and *Diſcourſes* of thoſe that had preached it to the World; and if they *ſo* preached it as that it ſhone forth to all Men, they muſt neceſſarily have preached it very plainly and clearly: Either therefore it was wrote as it was preached, or it was not; if it was not, it was not wrote truly and ſincerely; if it was, it was wrote very plainly, ſo as to make it appear and ſhine forth to all that read it. It is true, there are ſome Things *obſcure* both in the *Old Scriptures* and *New*; but then theſe are ſuch Things as are no Parts of the *Neceſſaries* and *Eſſentials* of *Religion*; ſuch Things as Men may be ſafely *ignorant* of, or be *miſtaken* about, without any Hazard of their *eternal* Life. For all that the *fore-cited* Teſtimonies prove is only this; that *that true Religion* by which *God* governs the Faith and Manners of Men, is ſo far forth as it is *neceſſary* to be believed and practiſed, plainly and clearly revealed to them in the *Holy Scriptures*. But beſides this, all Men agree there are a *great* many *other* Things revealed in *Holy Scripture*, which, becauſe they are not *neceſſary* for all Men to underſtand, are many of them not ſo plainly revealed as that all Men may underſtand

ſtand them. But ſince the *Scripture* was written to teach and inſtruct Men, to be ſure it teaches them moſt plainly that which is moſt *neceſſary* for them to know; and therefore ſince there are ſome Things plainly taught in *Scripture*, as is evident to any one that reads it, to be ſure among theſe Things are contained all that is *neceſſary* for Men to know and underſtand.

2. From the *avowed* Deſign of writing the *Scripture* it is alſo evident, that in all Things *neceſſary* it is *plain* and *clear*. For thus concerning the *Old Teſtament*, St. *Paul* tells us, that *whatſoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope*, Rom. xv. 4. And if they were written for our Learning and Inſtruction, to be ſure they were ſo written as to teach and inſtruct us, that is, plainly and clearly, eſpecially as to thoſe Things wherein we have moſt Need to be inſtructed. And then as for the *New Teſtament*, St. *Luke* tells his *Theophilus*, that the Reaſon of his writing his *Goſpel* was, that he might know the Certainty of thoſe Things that were ſurely believed among *Chriſtians*, and wherein he himſelf had been inſtructed: And if it were to aſcertain us of the Principles of *Chriſtianity* that he wrote his *Goſpel*, certainly he would take Care to write it after ſuch a Manner as that thoſe that read it might underſtand it, otherwiſe he muſt run counter to his *own* Deſign. Thus alſo St. *John* ſaith, that he wrote his *Goſpel* that Men might *believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of*

of God; but how could his *Gospel* induce Men to believe this, unless it be so *written* as that Men may understand it? And so also for his Epistles, he tells us that he wrote them that *they that believed in Jesus might know that they have eternal Life, and that they may believe*, or continue to believe, *on the Name of the Son of God:* And if this were his End, to be sure he would take Care to write so as that they might understand; otherwise, how could they know by his Writing that they had *eternal Life*, or be moved thereby to continue to believe on the Name of *Jesus?* For there is nothing can create in Men either Knowledge or Faith, but what they understand. Seeing therefore the *great* End of Writing the *Scripture*, was to instruct the World in the *great* Things of *Religion*, either we must say that both the Writers of the *Scripture*, and the *Holy Ghost* that inspired them, were *defective* in Skill, or in Care, so to write as to obtain this End; or that their Writings are an *effectual* Means to obtain it, which it is *impossible* for them to be, unless they are *plain* and *clear* as to the *great* Things of *Religion*. In short, every *wise* Agent pursues his End by the most *proper* and *effectual* Means; and I would fain know whether to write plainly, or obscurely, be the most *proper* Means to instruct Men by Writing; if to write plainly, then either the *Apostles* wrote so, or they were not *wise* Agents, since to instruct was the *great* End of their Writing. The most *natural* Way of conveying to Mens Minds the Notices of Things, is by Words either *spoken*, or *written*, and seeing whatsoever

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can be *ſpoken* in plain and *intelligible* Words may be *written* in the ſame Words, there can be no Doubt but thoſe Words will be as *intelligible* when they are *written*, as when they are *ſpoken*; for why ſhould the ſame Words be more *obſcure* when conveyed to us by our Eyes, that when conveyed to us by our Ears? Seeing then the Senſe of *Scripture* may be as plainly conveyed by Words *written*, as by Words *ſpoken*, and ſeeing that even thoſe who deny the Plainneſs of *Scripture*, do yet allow that the Senſe of it may be plainly conveyed by Words ſpoken, or, which is the ſame Thing, *Oral Tradition*; if the *Scripture* be not *plain*, it can be reſolved into no *other* Reaſon but this, that *God* would not have it ſo; for there is no Doubt but he could have *ſpoken* as plainly as Men, and have *written* as plainly as he ſpoke; and therefore if he hath not done ſo, it was becauſe he would not; but to ſay that he would not write thoſe Things plainly which he thought *neceſſary* for all Men to know, and which he wrote on Purpoſe that all Men might know, is to ſay that he would, and would not at the ſame Time; or that he wrote them on Purpoſe that Men might know them, and yet that he wrote ſo as that they might not know them.

3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture* it is alſo evident, that in all *neceſſary* Things it is *plain* and *clear*. That *God* doth not only allow, but wills and requires us to read the *Scripture*, I ſhall ſhew at large hereafter, when I come to treat of *ſearching the Scripture*. Suppoſing therefore at preſent the Thing to be *true*, I would fain know

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to what Purpoſe ſhould *God* require us to read the *Scripture*, if in thoſe Things which are *neceſſary* for Men to know and believe, it be not *plain* and *intelligible?* Doth *God* require us to read it for the Sake of reading it, or for the Sake of underſtanding it? If the *former*, reading any *other* Book might as well have anſwered God's End as reading the *Scripture*; becauſe Reading is Reading whatſoever it be that we read; if the *latter*, then either the *Scripture* is *plain* and *intelligible* as to all thoſe Things which he requires us to underſtand, or he requires us to read it in vain. For to what purpoſe ſhould we read that we may underſtand, if that which we are to read be not *plain* enough to be underſtood by us? As for Inſtance; the *Bereans*, Acts xvii. 11. are highly commended for *ſearching the Scriptures daily*; now I would fain know, was this a Virtue in them, or was it not? If not, why are they commended for it? If it was, it was certainly their Duty. What was the Intendment of it; was it only that thy might be expert Readers? Why are they ſo commended for reading the *Scriptures* above any *other* Book, ſeeing that reading any *other* Book would have done as well for that purpoſe as reading the *Scriptures?* But the Text itſelf tells us, that the Intendment of their reading the *Scripture* was, *that they might know whether thoſe Things were ſo* or no, which St. *Paul* had preached to them; but how ſhould they know this by reading the *Scripture*, if the *Scripture* which they read was not *plain* enough to be underſtood by them? Again, St. *Paul* gives this as a *great* Commendation of

his Son *Timothy*, that *from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures*; whence by the Way we may learn, that it is not so *great* a Reproach to our *Church* as the *Romanists* intend it for, that we permit *Women* and *Children*, *Tinkers and Coblers* to read the *Scripture*. But I pray, what was the Meaning of *Timothy's* knowing the *Holy Scripture from a Child*? Was it that he knew the Words of it only, or the Sense of it also? If the *former*, a *Parrot* may be taught as much as *Timothy* had learned, and consequently deserve as *high* a Commendation as he; if the *latter*, then it seems the *Scripture* is *plain* enough for a *well-disposed* Child to know the Sense of it, so far forth at least as it is *necessary* to be known, and this is as much as we desire. If therefore *God* requires us to read the *Scripture*, as *Timothy* did, to the End that we may know and understand it as he did, then either we may understand the Sense of it, by reading it, or else *God* requires us to read it in vain.

4. and *lastly*, From the Obligation we lie under upon Pain of Damnation to believe and receive those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in *Scripture*, it is also evident that as to all those *Necessaries* it is *plain* and *clear*. That we are obliged to believe under Pain of Damnation all that the *Scripture* proposes as *necessary* to our Salvation, is agreed on all Hands; but how can Men be justly obliged to believe such Things as are *obscure* and *doubtful*, and *uncertain*, and of which they can have no *certain* Knowledge? Either the *Necessaries* to Salvation must be plainly and clearly expressed in *Scripture*, or

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we have not *ſufficient* Reaſon to believe them; and to ſay *God* will damn us for not believing thoſe Things which he hath not given us *ſufficient* Reaſon to believe, is to charge him with the moſt *outragious* Oppreſſion and Injuſtice. But we are told, that though *God* hath not clearly revealed to us in *Scripture* thoſe Things which he hath obliged us to believe, upon Pain of Damnation, yet he hath left us *ſufficient* Reaſon to believe them; for he hath left us to the Conduct of an *infallible Church*, that is to ſay, of the *preſent Church of Rome* in all Ages, whom he hath *authorized* to explain and define to us all Things that are *neceſſary* to be believed, which we are to receive upon her Authority, and not upon the *Scripture*'s; ſo that if we firmly believe what ſhe deſigns and propoſes to us, we are ſure to believe all Things that are *neceſſary* to be believed. Now in Anſwer to this Objection, which indeed is the *great* Foundation that the Faith of thoſe of the *preſent Church of Rome* relies on, I deſire theſe Things may be ſeriouſly conſidered.

1. That before we can reaſonably rely upon the Authority of the *preſent Church of Rome*, in defining and propoſing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *ſundry* Things that we muſt believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

2. That theſe Things which we muſt believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of *that Church*, are at *leaſt* as obſcurely revealed in *Scripture*, as any *other* Article of our *Chriſtian* Faith.

3. That after all theſe Things, upon our relying on that *Church*'s Authority, we are left

to the *same*, or *greater* Uncertainties, than upon our relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

4. That in relying upon the Authority of the *Scripture* we are left to no *other* Uncertainties than just what is *necessary* to render our Faith *virtuous* and *rewardable*; whereas by relying upon the Authority of *that Church*, supposing it to be a *certain* Ground, as it is pretended, our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of *Virtue* in it.

1. That before we can reasonably rely upon the Authority of *that Church* in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *sundry* Things that we must believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*. As for instance, we must in the *first* Place believe that there is a *Church*, or Society of *Christians* separated from the World, or incorporated by a *peculiar divine* Charter. Now whether there be such a *Church* or no, is a Question that must be resolved by the *Scripture*, and not by the *Church*; because to believe that there is a *Church*, because the *Church* saith there is a *Church*, is to take that for granted which is the Thing in Question. *Secondly*, We must believe that this *Church* hath Authority to define and propose to us the Articles of our Faith, which must also for the same Reason be believed on the Authority of the *Scripture*, and not of the *Church*. For to believe that there is a *Church* that hath Authority to propose to us the Articles of our Faith, is to believe that there is a *Church* which we are obliged to believe; and how can I believe this upon the *Church*'s Authority, unless I can believe it before I do

believe

believe it? *Thirdly*, Before we can rely upon this *Church*'s Authority in defining and propoſing to us the Articles of our Faith, we muſt believe that this *Church* is *infallible*; for if ſhe be not *infallible*, how is it *conſiſtent* with the Truth of *God* to oblige us to believe her, ſeeing in ſo doing he muſt oblige us whenſoever ſhe errs to believe her Errors? But that ſhe is *infallible* is not to be believed upon her *own* Authority; for then her *infallible* Authority muſt be the Reaſon of our Belief that ſhe is *infallible*, that is, we muſt believe her *infallible*, becauſe we believe her *infallible*. Seeing then we cannot believe it on her *own* Authority, if we believe it at all, it muſt be upon the Authority of *Scripture*. *Fourthly*, Before we can rely upon the *Church of Rome's* Authority to define to us the Articles of our Faith, we muſt believe the *Church of Rome* to be this *infallible* Church: But ſeeing this is no *ſelf-evident* Principle, we muſt have ſome *other* Evidence beſides herſelf to induce us to believe it; and what elſe can that be but *Scripture?* We are told indeed by ſome of her *greateſt Divines*, that there are *certain* Marks and Notes of a *true Church* peculiar to the *Church of Rome*, by which we are obliged to believe her the *true Church*; ſuch as *Antiquity*, *Univerſality*, *Holineſs of Doctrine*, &c. But ſeeing no Doctrine can be *holy* that is not *true*, we muſt be ſatisfied that *that Church* is *true* before we can know that it is *holy*; ſo that before we can reaſonably ſubmit to her Authority, we muſt be very well aſſured that her Doctrine is *true*, and this we cannot be aſſured

of by her Authority, becauſe that as yet is the Matter in Queſtion; and therefore we can be no otherwiſe aſſured of it, but only by the Authority of *Scripture*; and when we are aſſured beforehand by the Authority of *Scripture*, that her Doctrines are *true*, her Authority comes *too* late to aſſure us. Seeing therefore it is evident that there are ſome, if not all the Articles of the *Roman Faith*, that muſt be known and believed by us upon the Authority of *Scripture*, before we can ſafely rely upon her Authority to define them to us, how can we be obliged to ſettle our Faith upon her Authority, when as before we can reaſonably admit her Authority, we muſt believe ſeveral of the Articles of our Faith upon the Authority of *Scripture?* For I would fain know, are theſe Articles of Faith, or no? *That there is a Church*; *that this Church hath Authority to define the Articles of our Faith, and that in ſo defining, this Church is infallible, and that this infallible Church is the Church of Rome?* If they be, as they themſelves own they are, then there are ſome Articles, it ſeems, that muſt be believed without the *Church*'s Authority upon the *ſingle* Authority of *Scripture*; and if *ſome*, why not *all?* Why ſhould not the *Scripture* be as *ſufficient* to *authorize* us to believe the Reſt as theſe, ſince its Authority is as *great* in *one* Text as in *another?* Eſpecially conſidering,

2. That theſe Things which we muſt believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of the *Church of Rome*, are at leaſt as obſcurely revealed in *Scripture* as any *other* Article of our *Chriſtian* Faith. The *great* Reaſon

Reaſon urged by the *Romaniſts* againſt our Reliance upon the *Scripture* for our Faith, is the Obſcurity of it; and if this be a *good* Reaſon, it proves a *great* deal more than they would have it, *viz.* that we ought not to rely upon *Scripture*, even for thoſe Articles, without believing of which we can have no *ſufficient* Ground to rely upon the Authority of their *Church:* For I would fain know, is it *clear* and *plain* from Scripture that the *preſent Catholick Church* of every Age hath Authority to define Articles of Faith, and that in all its Definitions it is *infallible?* and that the *preſent Church of Rome* is this *Catholick Church?* If ſo, how came thoſe Texts upon which thoſe Articles are founded to be underſtood in a quite *different* Senſe, not only by us, but by the *greateſt* Part of the *primitive Fathers*, as hath been abundantly proved by *Proteſtant* Writers? Suppoſing that we ſhould be ſo *blinded* by our Partiality to *our own* Tenets as to miſapprehend *plain* and *clear* Expreſſions of *Scripture*, it is very *ſtrange* methinks that the *Fathers*, who were never engaged in the Controverſy, and ſo could not be biaſſed either *one* Way or *t'other*, ſhould yet miſapprehend them too. What is this but to ſay, that let Men be never ſo *indifferent*, yet they may be eaſily miſtaken in the Senſe of very *plain* and *clear* Expreſſions; and if ſo, what ſignifies either Speaking or Writing? But to proceed to ſome Inſtances; will any *modeſt* Man in the World affirm, that the *Church of Rome*'s *Infallibility* in defining Articles of Faith to all *ſucceeding* Generations, is more plainly expreſſed in thoſe Words of our *Saviour*,

Thou art Peter, *and upon this Rock will I build my Church*, than the *Divinity* of our *Saviour* is in the Beginning of the *firſt* Chapter of St. *John's* Goſpel, where it is expreſly affirmed that he is *God*; whereas in the *other* there is not the leaſt Mention either of the *Church of Rome*, or of *Infallibility*, or defining Articles of Faith? Why may we not then as well depend upon the *one* Text for the Article of our *Saviour*'s *Divinity*, as upon the *other*, for that of the *Church of Rome*'s *Infallibility?* Again, are there not *innumerable* Texts of Scripture, wherein the Articles of *Remiſſion of Sin*, *the Reſurrection of the Dead*, *the laſt Judgment*, *and the World to come*, are at leaſt as plainly expreſſed as the *preſent Church of Rome*'s *Infallibility* is in any of thoſe Texts that are urged in the Defence of it? And therefore if we believe the *latter* upon the Authority of *Scripture*, notwithſtanding the pretended Obſcurity of it, why may we not as well upon the ſame Authority believe all the *former*, ſince the *former* are at leaſt as plainly expreſſed as the *latter?* Either therefore the *Scripture* is *plain* enough to be relied upon, as to *this* Article of the *Church of Rome*'s *Infallibility*, or it is not; if it be not, we have no Ground for our Dependance upon the Authority of her Definitions and Propoſals; if it be, it is *plain* enough to be relied upon in all other *neceſſary* Articles of Faith, ſince theſe are all as plainly at leaſt expreſſed in *Scripture* as that. For if we may not rely upon the *Scripture* becauſe it is not *plain*, then where it is equally *plain*, it is equally to be relied on.

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3. That when we come to rely upon this *Church*'s Authority, we are expoſed to far *greater* Uncertainties than while we relied upon the Authority of *Scripture*. For in the *firſt* Place, we are of all Sides agreed that the *Scripture* is *infallible*, and that *ſuch* and *ſuch* Writings are Parts of *Scripture*; and therefore are abſolutely *ſecure*, that if we follow the *true* Senſe of it, it cannot miſlead us. But the much *greater* Part of *Chriſtians* deny that the *Church of Rome* is infallible; even the *Church of Rome* itſelf owns the Authority we rely on to be *infallible*, but all *Chriſtians* all the World over, beſides thoſe of her *own* Communion, diſallow *hers* to be ſo; and to forſake our Dependance upon an *Infallibility* which *all* own, to rely upon an *Infallibility* which but *few* in Compariſon admit, is certainly a very *dangerous* Venture. And then, *Secondly*, As for the *Infallibility* of *Scripture*, we are *certain* where to find it; *viz.* in every Text, and in every Propoſition therein contained, which being all the *Word of God*, muſt be all *infallible*. But as for the *Infallibility* of the *Roman Church*, as they have handled the Matter, it is almoſt as *difficult* to find as to prove it; ſome cry, lo it is here; and ſome, lo it is there; ſome place it in the *Pope* only, others in the *Pope* and his *College* of *Cardinals*; ſome in the *Pope* preſiding in a *general Council*; others in a *general Council* whether the *Pope* preſide in it or no. So that in this *Church* it ſeems, there is *Infallibility* ſomewhere, but what are we the better for it if we know no where to find it? If we go to the *Pope* for it; there have

have been *two* or *three Popes* at once that have decreed against *one another*; and therefore *one* or the *other* of them to be sure were mistaken. How then shall we know which is the *true infallible* one? And when I have found the *true Pope*, others tell me I am not yet arrived at the Seat of *Infallibility*, until I have found him in his *College* of *Cardinals*; and when I have found him here, I am still to seek, seeing I find the same *Pope* (*Eugenius the Fourth for* Instance) decreeing *one* Thing in his *College* of *Cardinals*, and the quite *contrary* in a *general Council*; and therefore I am sure he could not be *infallible* in both. Therefore others send me to the *Pope* in a *general Council*; but when I come thither, I find myself at a Loss again; because I meet with several Instances of *one Pope*'s defining *one* Thing in *one general Council*; and *another* Pope, the quite *contrary* in *another*; and therefore in *one* or the *other Council*, I am sure the *one* or the *other Pope* was mistaken. And as for *general Councils* themselves, there are *sundry* of them which are owned by *some*, and rejected by *others* of the *principal* Doctors of the *Roman Communion*. And even when *Councils* are legally assembled, there are so many *nice* Disputes among them, what it is that makes them *general*, and when it is that they act *conciliariter*, as they call it; that is, so as to render their Decree perpetually and universally obliging; that though we were resolved to build our Faith upon the Authority of *this Church*, yet if we will use that Caution in believing that we ought to do in a Matter

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of ſo great Moment, we ſhould find ourſelves involved in greater Uncertainties concerning theſe Things, than we are concerning the Senſe even of the moſt *difficult* Places of *Scripture*. But then, *Thirdly*, When we are paſſed over all theſe Difficulties, we are ſtill at as *great* a Loſs to underſtand what is the Senſe of the *Church* to be believed by us, as what is the Senſe of *Scripture*: For the *Church* hath no *other* Way to deliver her Senſe to us but either by *oral Tradition*, that is, by Word of Mouth, or by *Writing*; if ſhe deliver her Senſe to me by *oral Tradition*, how can I know what that is who never heard her ſpeak either in its *diffuſed* Body, or in a *general Council*, or in any *other* Repreſentative; unleſs it be that of my own *Pariſh-Prieſt* perhaps, who for all I know, may be *ignorant*, or *heretical*, and ſo either not underſtand himſelf the Church's *oral Tradition*, or wilfully pervert it to a *contrary* Meaning? And if the *Church* deliver her Senſe to me by Writing, as ſhe hath done in the *written* Decrees of her *general Councils*, muſt I read over all her Decrees? How ſhould I do that, who underſtand not ſo much as the Languages in which they are written? Or ſuppoſe they were tranſlated, how ſhall I know that they are faithfully rendered, any more than I do that the *Scripture* is ſo? But ſuppoſe I were *certain* of this, and ſhould thereupon proceed to read them, alas, I find in them a *great* many *difficult* and *dubious* Expreſſions; yea, and at leaſt *ſeeming* Contradictions to *each other*; how then can I be more certain of the true Senſe of theſe Writings than of the Senſe

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of the Writings of *Scripture?* But you will say, the *Church* hath digested her Sense of all her Articles of Faith into a *plain Creed* and *Catechism*, *viz.* that of the *Council of Trent*, whereby the plainest Reader may, without any *laborious* Enquiries, be ready instructed in what he ought to believe. This, I confess, is something; but as for those Articles of Faith wherein *We* and the *Church of Rome* are agreed, we find them as plainly expressed in *Scripture* as in that *Creed* and *Catechism*; and therefore we have Reason to believe, that if those Articles wherein we disagree had ever been intended for Articles of Faith, they would have been as plainly expressed there as these; but it is no Wonder we should not find them plainly expressed *there*, when we cannot find them expressed *there* at all. But do we not find that the Scriptures, even in the *plainest* Expressions of Articles of Faith, have yet been perverted by *Hereticks* into a *contrary* Meaning? And what then? Are not the Words of *Councils* as liable to be perverted into a *contrary* Meaning as the Words of *Scripture?* For do not the *Roman* Doctors differ as much about the Sense of their *Councils*, as we do about the Sense of our *Scriptures?* Yea, and have we not a *notorious* Instance of it at this very Day? For what can be more *contrary* than *Belarmine*'s Exposition of the *Trent Faith*, and the *Bishop* of *Condom*'s? And yet both allowed by the *Pope*, who by the Authority of that *Council* is made *sole* Arbitrator of the Sense of it. But then *Fourthly*, and *lastly*, As to the Sense of *Scripture*, our Reliance on the Authority of that

that *Church* leaves us at as *great* an Uncertainty as it found us. For where the *Scripture* designs to speak plainly, as it doth in all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation, the *Church* cannot ſpeak *plainer*; and therefore there we may underſtand the *Scripture* as well without the *Church* as with it; but where it doth not ſpeak plainly, the *Church of Rome* hath left us no *infallible* Commentary whereby to underſtand it; ſo that where the *Scripture* is *plain*, ſhe hath not made it *plainer*; and where it is *obſcure*, ſhe hath left it as *obſcure* as ever: So that after all the Noiſe that is made of *Infallibility*, her Doctors are fain to apply themſelves to the ſame Methods of underſtanding *Scripture*; that is, to conſult the Senſe of *Antiquity*, and compare Text with Text, and the like, that we *fallible* Proteſtants do; and when they have done all, are as *liable* to be miſtaken as we. Nay, they themſelves confeſs, that even *general Councils* themſelves may be miſtaken in their Applications of *Scripture*; that is, that they may miſapply them to *wrong* Purpoſes, which they cannot do without miſtaking the Senſe of them, of which there are a *great* many *notorious* Inſtances in the *ſecond Council of Nice*; which to prove it the Duty of *Chriſtians* to worſhip *Images*, urges God's taking Clay, and making Man after his *own* Image; and likewiſe that of *Eſay*, *There ſhall be a Sign and Teſtimony to the Lord in the Land of Egypt*; and alſo thoſe Paſſages of *David*, *Confeſſion and Beauty*, *is before him. Lord, I have loved the Beauty of thy Houſe. O Lord, my Face hath ſought for thee. O*

Lord,

Lord, I will ſeek after thy Countenance. O Lord, the Light of thy Countenance is ſcaled over us. And from that Paſſage, *As we have ſeen, ſo have we heard*, they argue that there muſt be Images to look on; and becauſe it is ſaid, *God is marvellous in his Saints*, they conclude that the *Church* muſt be decked with Pictures: And from *No Man lighteth a Candle and putteth it under a Buſhel*, they wiſely infer that *Images* muſt be ſet upon the Altar; all which are as *remote* from their Senſe as the *firſt* Verſe of the *firſt* Chapter of *Geneſis*. What *greater* Certainty have they with their *Infallibility*, than we without it? We can know as well the Senſe of *plain* Texts of *Scripture*, as of *plain* Texts of *Councils*, or *Creeds*, or *Catechiſms*; and we can as eaſily pervert the Senſe of the *one* as of the *other:* And as for thoſe that are not *plain*, even *general Councils* you ſee, for all their *Infallibility*, may be miſtaken about them as well as we. So that when all comes to all, by forſaking the *infallible* Authority of *Scripture* to rely upon the *infallible* Authority of *that Church*, we are ſo far from arriving at a *greater* Certainty of Faith, that we are involved in *greater* Uncertainties than ever. But then,

4. and *laſtly*, In relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*, we are left to no *other* Uncertainties than juſt what are *neceſſary* to render our Faith *virtuous* and *rewardable*; whereas, by relying upon the Authority of the *Church of Rome* (ſuppoſing it was as *ſure* a Ground of Faith as it is pretended) our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of Virtue in it. It is pretended (though

(though falſly you ſee) that *that Church*'s Authority is ſo *ſure* a Ground of Faith, that while a Man depends upon it he cannot be miſtaken in any *neceſſary* Article of Faith; which in Reality amounts to no more than this; that while a Man believes as *that Church* believes, which infallibly believes all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation; and it is equally *true*, that while a Man believes as the *Scripture* teaches, which infallibly teaches all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation; that is, both are equally *falſe*. For no Man can infallibly believe either the *Church* or *Scripture*, becauſe *Infallibility* exceeds the Capacity of *human* Nature; no Man can ſo believe *either*, but that he may be miſtaken, and if he may be miſtaken, it is *poſſible* he may not believe all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation, whether he grounds his Faith upon the *Church*, or the *Scripture*. But becauſe this *Church* pretends ſo to ſecure my Faith while I depend upon her Authority as that I cannot be miſtaken, for this very Reaſon I cannot depend upon it, becauſe I am ſure of this, that *God* never deſigned for me any ſuch Means of believing as ſhould render my Faith *infallible*. For to what End ſhould he require me to take ſo much Pains and Care to ſecure my Faith from Errors, if he hath furniſhed me with any *certain* Means of being *infallible*? It would be but applying that Means, whatever it is, and my Danger would be immediately over; and then I need trouble my Head no further, being now ſo *ſecured* as that I cannot be

be miſtaken; after which it would be very *impertinent*, methinks, for *God* to trouble me with thoſe *unneceſſary* Injunctions *of trying all Things, and holding faſt to that which is good*; *of ſearching the Scriptures, and trying the Spirits whether they be of God*; *and taking heed whilſt I ſtand, leſt I fall.* What need a Man be at the Expence of all this Labour and Caution, whoſe Faith is already ſecured? Seeing therefore *God* requires theſe Things at our Hands, it is a *plain* Caſe that he never intended us any Method how to be *infallible* in believing; and therefore ſince the *Church of Rome*'s Authority is pretended to be ſuch a Method, for that Reaſon it ought to be rejected. It is plain that *God* intended that our Faith ſhould be a Grace and a Virtue, and conſequently that it ſhould be an Act of our Wills, as well as of our Underſtandings, which ſuppoſes the Evidence of it to be *irreſiſtible*; for what Virtue is it to believe that the Sun ſhines when it glares full in our Eyes? Since therefore our Faith muſt be a *free* and *voluntary* Aſſent upon ſuch Motives as are *ſufficient* to ſatisfy an *honeſt* Mind, but not to compel either an *obſtinate* Infidel, or *ſelf-deceiving* Hypocrite; *God* did not think fit ſo to ſecure our Faith as to leave it *impoſſible* for us to err *damnably*; and indeed if he had, it would have been no Virtue in us to believe *ſavingly*; for what Virtue is it for a Man to do that which it is *impoſſible* for him not to do? It is *ſufficient* that we cannot err damnably in our Faith without ſome *damnable* Fault in our Wills; but if we either refuſe to enquire into this Revelation for what is *neceſ-*

ſary

ſary for us to believe, or will only enquire into it with a Mind that is biaſſed with *wicked* and *ſinful* Prejudices, or will not ſubmit our Underſtandings to it upon the *cleareſt* Conviction, there is no Doubt but we may be *ignorant*, and we may be deceived in Things of the *greateſt* Moment, and it is but *juſt* and *fit* that we ſhould: And if, notwithſtanding theſe Faults, we could not err, for God's Sake what Virtue would it be to be *Orthodox?* But if with *honeſt*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds, we will diligently enquire into *divine* Revelation, we ſhall there find all the *Neceſſaries* to Salvation ſo clearly and plainly propoſed to us, that it will be *morally impoſſible* for us either to be *ignorant* of, or deceived about them. So that by relying on *Scripture*, you ſee we are expoſed to no *other* Uncertainties than juſt what are *neceſſary* to render our Faith a Virtue; and *God* doth as much require that our Faith ſhould be *virtuous*, as that it ſhould be *Orthodox*; that it ſhould be the Act of an *honeſt*, *humble*, *diligent*, and *teachable* Mind, as that it ſhould be extended to all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation. Now our Faith may be *Orthodox* without an *infallible* Certainty, but it cannot be *virtuous* and *rewardable* with it. To what Purpoſe then do the *Romaniſts* talk of an *infallible* Certainty in Believing? Is it *reaſonable* to expect more Certainty than *God* ever intended to give? He hath given as much as is *neceſſary* for *honeſt* Minds, and no more, and whether *Knaves* and *Hypocrites* believe *right* or *wrong* is of no *great* Concernment. If therefore our Faith be *liable* to no *other* Uncertainty than

juſt what is *neceſſary* to try our Honeſty, that is much *better* for us in reſpect of the Virtue of our Faith than an *infallible* Certainty. Suppoſing therefore that the *Church of Rome* were as *infallible* as it pretends, it is certain that the *Scripture* is as *infallible* as that; but whether we rely upon *one* or the *other*, we are *fallible* ſtill. And could that *Church* render us as infallibly *certain* as it pretends, it would thereby preſerve indeed the *Orthodoxy* of our Faith, but then at the ſame Time it would deſtroy the Virtue of it: For to believe *right*, when we cannot believe *wrong*, is *fatal* and *neceſſary*; but to believe *right*, when through *our own* Default we may believe *wrong*, this is *virtuous* and *rewardable*.

By what hath been ſaid therefore, I think it is ſufficiently evident, that it is upon the *Scripture* we are to rely, and not upon the *Church*, eſpecially upon the *Roman Church*, for all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation; and therefore ſince we are obliged to believe theſe Things upon Pain of *eternal* Damnation, it neceſſarily follows that they muſt be *plain* and *clear*, and *Scripture*; otherwiſe we could not be juſtly ſo obliged to believe them. And thus I have ſhewn at large that the *Scripture* is the *great* Rule of our Faith and Manners, and that as ſuch, it is both *full* and *clear*, as containing in it all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation, and propoſing them ſo plainly and clearly, as that upon an *honeſt* and *diligent* Enquiry, all Men may find and diſcover them.

OF

OF THE

Obligation *of the* People

To READ the

SCRIPTURES.

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1 JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life.

WHETHER theſe Words are to be rendered *indicatively* [*Ye do ſearch the Scriptures*] *as ſome would have them*, or *imperatively* [*Search the Scriptures*] as our Tranſlation renders them, amounts to the ſame Thing; for if we render them *indicatively*, [*Ye do ſearch the Scriptures*] it is evident, that they are ſpoken with Approbation, *Ye do read the Scriptures, and ye do very well in ſo doing:* For thus we find the *Bereans* commended for *ſearching the Scriptures*, and *Timothy*, for *knowing them from a Child.* And if to ſearch the *Scriptures* be a *commendable* Practice, then to be ſure our *Saviour* here mentions it at leaſt with Approbation; and what he approves when done, that to be ſure he would have us do. Whether therefore it be delivered in the Form

of a Command, or of a *bare* Aſſertion, it is *equivalent* to a Command, it being at leaſt an Aſſertion of a Thing which he approves, and conſequently would have all Men to practiſe. But becauſe there is a numerous Party in the *Chriſtian* World which doth not only forbid the People to ſearch the *Scriptures*, but repreſents is as a Practice of very *dangerous* Conſequence, it is hereby become *neceſſary* that we ſhould not only aſſert, but prove their Obligation to it, which otherwiſe would be very *needleſs*, there being nothing more *plain* and *evident* in itſelf. Now to prove that the People are obliged to ſearch and read the *Scriptures*, I ſhall, as briefly as I can, argue the Point from theſe following Topicks.

1. From the Obligations which the *Jews* were under to read and ſearch the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament*.

2. From our *Saviour*'s and his Apoſtles Approbation of their Practice in Purſuance of this their Obligation.

3. From the *great* Deſign and Intention of writing the *Scriptures*.

4. From the Direction of theſe *Holy Writings* to the People.

5. From the *great* Concernment of the People in the Matters contained in them.

6. From the *univerſal* Senſe of the *Primitive Church* in this Matter.

1. From the *general* Obligation which the *Jews* were under to read and ſearch their *Scriptures*. For ſo *God requires* them to *keep* *the*

the Words which he commanded them, in their Hearts, and *to teach them diligently to their Children,* and *to talk of them as they ſat in their Houſes, and as they walked in the Way, and when they lay down, and when they roſe up, and to bind them as a Sign upon their Hands,* Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8. And elſewhere, this *Book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein Day and Night,* ſpeaking to the Children of *Iſrael* in general, *Joſhua* i. 8. And again, *Ye ſhall lay up theſe my Words in your Heart, and in your Soul, that your Days may be multiplied, and the Days of your Children, in the Land which the Lord ſware unto your Fathers to give them, as the Days of Heaven upon the Earth.* Deut. xi. 18, 21. And to *meditate on God's Law Day and Night, David* makes a Part of the Character of the *bleſſed* Man. *Pſalm* i. 3. Now if they could not keep God's Laws in their Hearts, as moſt certainly they could not, if they could not teach them to their Children; if they could not talk of them upon all *juſt* and *proper* Occaſions; and in a Word, if they could not meditate on them Day and Night, without being very well acquainted with them by diligent Search and reading them, it is moſt *certain,* that to read and ſearch into them was their *indiſpenſible* Duty. Now if there be the ſame Reaſon why *we* ſhould read the *Scriptures* as there was why the *Jews* ſhould, then the Obligation of theſe Commands muſt extend to *us* as well as to *them*; becauſe the Reaſon of the Law is the Law; but 'tis evident, even beyond Contradiction, that there

is no *good* Reaſon aſſignable for the *one*, which is not of *equal* Force for the *other*; and whatſoever is objected by our Adverſaries in this Point againſt our reading the *Scriptures*, is of *equal* Validity againſt the *Jews* reading them. It is objected, That our reading them, through our Incapacity to underſtand them, muſt occaſion a great many *Errors* and *Hereſies* in the *Church*. And why ſhould not their reading them occaſion the ſame, ſince neither their Underſtandings were *larger* than ours, nor their Scriptures *clearer* and more *intelligible* than ours? It is farther objected, that becauſe of the many *ill* Examples recorded in *Scripture*, it is *dangerous* for the People to read it, becauſe of their Aptneſs to be miſled and corrupted by Example. But I beſeech you, are there not more *bad* Examples in the *Old Teſtament* than in the *New?* And were not the *Jews* as apt to be corrupted by them as we *Chriſtians?* And therefore, ſince theſe Objections do preſs as much againſt their reading the *Scriptures* as ours, it is certain they ought to keep *both* from it or *neither*. Seeing therefore notwithſtanding theſe Objections, *God* obliged the *Jews* to read them, it is plain they are not of Force enough to diſoblige us from doing the ſame.

2. From our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* Approbation of this Practice of the *Jews* in Purſuance of their Obligation to it, it is alſo evident, that we are obliged to the ſame. That the *common People* of the *Jews* did ordinarily read the *Scriptures* in our *Saviour*'s Time, is evident not only from the Text, *Search the Scriptures*

Scriptures (which if you take them *indicatively*, are an expreſs Declaration that they did read them; and if you take them *imperatively*, neceſſarily imply that they themſelves owned that they ought to read them) but alſo from thoſe Queſtions which our *Saviour* frequently aſked them in his Conferences with them; ſuch as, *Have ye not read? Have ye never read in the Scripture?* And *hath not the Scripture ſaid ſo and ſo?* Which Queſtion would be very *impertinent*, if reading the *Scripture* were not then ordinarily practiſed by that People. And that even their *holy* Women were then ſo well inſtructed in the *Scriptures* as to be able to inſtruct their Children, *Timothy* is a *ſignal* Inſtance, who, though his *Father* were a *Heathen*, had *known the Holy Scriptures from a Child*, 2 Tim. iii. 15; which Knowledge he muſt neceſſarily have derived from his *Grandmother Lois*, and his *Mother Eunice*, whoſe Faith St. *Paul* celebrates, 2 *Tim.* i. 5. And this Practice of reading the Scriptures, which was ſo *common* among that People in our Saviour's Time, is ſo far from being diſcontinued, either by *himſelf*, or his *Apoſtles*, that it is always mentioned by them with Applauſe and Approbation. Thus the *Bereans* are commended as a People of a *nobler* Strain than thoſe of *Theſſalonica*, becauſe *they ſearched the Scriptures daily*, *whether* thoſe Things which St. *Paul* had preached to them, were ſo or no. And St. *Paul* is ſo far from reprehending *Timothy* for meddling with the *Scriptures* whilſt he was a *Layman*, that he mentions it to his Honour, *that he had known the Scrip-*

tures from a Child. And in all thoſe Paſſages where our *Saviour* takes it for granted that the *common People* of the *Jews* did read the *Scripture*, we have not the *leaſt* Intimation of his Diſlike of their Practice, which we ſhould certainly have had, had he apprehended it to be either *dangerous* or *unwarrantable.* Seeing therefore neither our *Saviour* nor his *Apoſtles* do in the *leaſt* diſallow of the *Scriptures* being read by the *common People*, but on the contrary do expreſly commend it; this is a *plain* Argument that it was their Intention to perpetuate the Practice of it to *future* Ages. For ſeeing the *Jews* read the *Scriptures* in Obedience to an *expreſs* Command of *God*, as was ſhewn before, had our *Saviour* intended that they ſhould not continue it, he would doubtleſs have repealed that Command by ſome Countermand, which he was ſo far from doing, that he not only every where allows of their reading the *Scriptures*, but alſo expreſly approves and commends it; whereby he plainly eſtabliſhes the *Obligation* of that *antient* Command, in Obedience to which they did read them.

3. From the *great* Deſign and Intention of writing the *Scriptures*, it is alſo evident, that the *People* are ſtill obliged to read them. It is plain the *great* Deſign of writing the *Scriptures* was to inſtruct Men in the Knowledge, and perſuade them to the Practice of *true Religion*; for thus of the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament* St. *Paul* tells us, that *whatſoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*, Rom. xv. 4. and *for our Admonition*, 1 Cor. x. 11. And as for the *New Teſtament*, we

we are told, that it was written *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we might have Life through his Name*, John xx. 31. And St. *Peter* tells us, that he wrote both his Epistles to *stir up the pure Minds of Christians by way of Remembrance, and to put them in Mind of the Words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour*, 2 Pet. iii. 1. And St. *John* gives us this Account of his writing his Epistles; *these Things have I written to you that ye sin not*, 1 John ii. 1. And St. *Jude*, this of his: *Beloved, when I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*; v. 3. These are the Ends for which the *Scripture* was written; but how can the Writing of it contribute to these Ends, if we are not permitted to read what is written? For the *Scripture* was written to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*, as I shall shew by and by; but to what Purpose should it be written to the *People* to instruct and admonish them, if the *People* are not allowed to read its Instructions and Admonitions? What Influence could the writing it have upon the People's Belief, that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, if they had been debarred from acquainting themselves with what is written concerning him? How could it stir up their Remembrance, if they might not read what it suggested to their Memory? By what *other* Way can it keep the

the *People* from ſinning, but by Motives and Perſuaſions? But how ſhould its Motives and Perſuaſions affect their Minds, if they are not allowed to conſult and underſtand them? Upon what Account can it move the *People* earneſtly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, if they are not allowed to learn from it either what that Faith is, or what thoſe Reaſons are which oblige them to contend for it? So that to write to the *People* on Purpoſe to inſtruct and reform them, and at the ſame Time to purpoſe to debar them from reading it, is either to ſuppoſe, that the Writing will operate like a Charm, or to purpoſe a *downright* Contradiction. For how oddly would it have looked, if in the *afore-cited* Paſſages, the *Apoſtles* had expreſſed themſelves thus: "*Theſe* "*Things are written for your Learning and* "*Admonition; but it is by no Means fit you* "*ſhould learn from them what they teach and* "*admoniſh you. Theſe Things are written,* "*that ye ſhould believe that Jeſus is the* "*Chriſt and the Son of God; but they are not* "*written that you ſhould enquire of them* "*whether Jeſus be the Chriſt, or the Son of* "*God. Theſe Things are written to put you* "*in Mind of what hath been ſpoken by the* "*Prophets and Apoſtles; but they were not* "*written that you might acquaint yourſelves* "*by them what the Prophets and Apoſtles* "*ſpake. Theſe Things are written that you* "*ſhould not ſin; but beware you do not read* "*them, leſt the bad Examples recorded in* "*them occaſion you to ſin.*" In ſhort, "*Theſe* "*Things were written to excite you earneſtly*

"*to*

" *to contend for the Faith once delivered to* " *the Saints*; *but you are by no means allowed* " *to enquire into them, leſt you ſhould miſun-* " *derſtand them, and ſo, inſtead of contending* " *for the Faith, you ſhould contend for Hereſy* " *and falſe Doctrine?*" Had the *Apoſtles* thus expreſſed themſelves, I appeal to any *reaſonable* Man, whether theſe Paſſages would not have ſtartled his Underſtanding, and tempted him to queſtion whether the Authors of them were *well* in their Wits; and yet this muſt have been their Meaning, ſuppoſing that they meant that the *People* ſhould not read what they wrote.

4. From the Direction of theſe *holy Writings* to the *People*, it is alſo evident, that the *People* are ſtill obliged to read, or acquaint themſelves with them. For ſo we find the Law of *Moſes* was delivered by *God* to all the *People* as well as to *him* and *Aaron*; and (as was ſhewn before) they were all of them commanded to ſearch and enquire into it: And ſo alſo were the *Sermons* of the *Prophets*, which are uſually prefaced with an *Hear, O Iſrael, hear, O Houſe of* Judah, *hear, O Houſe of* Jacob, *and hear all ye of* Judah. So alſo our *bleſſed Saviour* preached his *Sermons* and *Parables*, not only to his *Apoſtles*, and *ſeventy Diſciples*, but alſo to the *People*, and to the Multitudes. And ſo alſo his *Apoſtles* direct their Epiſtles, not only *to the Saints, to the Faithful in Chriſt Jeſus, to the Beloved, which* in the Language of *Scripture* includes every *Chriſtian*; but alſo *to all that are at* Rome, *to all that in every Place call upon the Name of* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord,*

Lord, to all the Saints which are in Achaia, *to all the Saints which are at* Philippi, *to the twelve Tribes which are ſcattered abroad, to the Strangers ſcattered through* Pontus, Galatia, *&c.* and *to them which have obtained like precious Faith with us*; that is, to all the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* diſperſed over the World. Seeing therefore the *Scriptures* were directed to all, as well *Laity* as *Clergy*, this not only gives a Right to *all* to read them, but alſo lays an Obligation upon *all* to acquaint themſelves with them. For the very directing ſuch a Writing, or Epiſtle, to *ſuch* or *ſuch* Perſons, doth, in the Senſe of all the World, imply, that he who writes doth deſign and intend, that they to whom he directs it ſhould read and peruſe it; and therefore, ſince the *Scriptures* were written to *all*, that is a *plain* Intimation that it was the Intention of the Writers that *all* ſhould read them. And for us not to read what *God* hath written, and directed to us, is by Implication of Fact, a *profane* Neglect and Contempt of his Mercy, and looks as if we either thought him ſuch an *inſignificant* Being, or ourſelves ſo *little* concerned in any Thing that he can ſay or write to us, as that it would not be worth our while to receive, and peruſe the Contents of thoſe *ſacred* Epiſtles, which by the Hand of his *holy Penmen* he hath vouchſafed to direct to us. Nor is it a *ſufficient* Excuſe for our Contempt, to ſay, that in Conſideration of *our own* Proneneſs to err and miſtake, we ought to content ourſelves with this, that our *ſpiritual Guides* ſhould read God's Writings for us, and deliver the Senſe

Senſe and Contents of them to us: For to be ſure, had *God* intended that the *Prieſts* only ſhould read them, he would have directed them only to the *Prieſts*, and ordered them only to deliver the Senſe of them to *the People*; and therefore, ſince he hath directed them to *both*, this neceſſarily implies that it was his Intention that *both* ſhould read them. For if *God* had not directed them to Men, neither *Prieſts* nor *People* were obliged to read them; and therefore ſeeing the *great* Reaſon why any Men ought to read them is, becauſe they are directed to Men, this Reaſon obliges all Men to read them, becauſe they are directed to all Men. For not to be highly concerned to know and underſtand what it is that *God* writes to us, is an Argument that we have a very *mean* Regard both of his Majeſty, and his Mind, and Will. But to be ſure whoſoever is highly concerned to know what ſuch a Writing contains, will, if he can, be very *curious* to peruſe it with his *own* Eyes at leaſt, ſuppoſing that it is not *unlawful* for him ſo to do; becauſe there is nothing gives that Satisfaction to a Man's Mind as the Information of his *own* Senſe. So that for Men wilfully to neglect reading the *Scripture* which *God* hath ſo expreſly directed to them, and thereby not only licenſed, but obliged them to read it, argues a very *profane* Diſregard both of the Author of it, and of the Matter it contains; and for any Man, or Society of Men, to forbid the *People* to read what *God* hath written and direct to them, is not only to deprive them of a Right which *God* hath given them, but alſo to acquit them of a Duty which he

he hath laid upon them. For St. *Paul*, in thoſe Epiſtles which he wrote to the *Chriſtian People* in *general* of *ſuch* and *ſuch Churches*, ſtill takes it for granted that they would read them, as being not only warranted, but obliged thereunto by his writing them; for ſo *Epheſ.* iii. 3, 4. ſpeaking of that *great* Myſtery of the Calling the *Gentiles* which *God* hath revealed to him, concerning which, ſaith he, *I wrote afore in few Words, whereby when ye read ye may underſtand my Knowledge in the Myſtery of Chriſt.* So alſo 2 *Cor.* i. 13. *We write no other Things unto you, than what you read*; that is, than what you may, at leaſt, and are obliged to read by Virtue of our writing them to you. And as for his Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, which he wrote to that *whole Church*, he gives Charge that it ſhould *be read to all the holy Brethren*, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 27. So alſo for that of the *Coloſſians*, *When this Epiſtle* is, or hath been, *read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the Church of the Laodiceans*; *and that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea.* Where you ſee he all along either ſuppoſes or requires that what he wrote to *all* ſhould be read by *all*, and to *all.* If therefore this Authority of St. *Paul* be *ſufficient* to overrule the Authority of any *pretended Succeſſor of* St. *Peter*, then it is certain that reading the *Scripture* is ſtill the Duty of *Laymen*, notwithſtanding any *Papal* Prohibition to the contrary.

5. From the *great* Concernment the *People* have in the Matters contained in *Scripture*, it is alſo evident that they are obliged, if they

are

are able, to read it and acquaint themſelves with it: For as for the Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, they are ſuch as are of *everlaſting* Moment to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*. The Articles of Faith which the *Scripture* propoſes are as *neceſſary* to be believed by the *People* as by the *Clergy*. The Precepts of Life which the *Scripture* preſcribes are as *neceſſary* to be practiſed by the *People*, as by the *Clergy*. The Promiſes and Threats with which the *Scripture* enforces thoſe Precepts, are as *neceſſary* to be conſidered by the *People*, as by the *Clergy*: And ſeeing both are equally concerned in the *great* Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, what Reaſon can be aſſigned why *both* ſhould not be obliged to acquaint themſelves with them? I know it is pretended that it is the *proper* Office of the *Clergy* to ſtudy the *Scriptures* for the *People* as well as for *themſelves*, and that therefore the *People* are obliged to receive the Senſe of the *Scriptures* upon Truſt from their Teachers, without making any farther Enquiry. But I beſeech you, are you ſure that your Teachers are *infallible*? That they are not ſo is moſt *certain*, it being *notorious* that moſt of the *prevailing Hereſies* of *Chriſtendom* were *firſt* ſet on Broach by the *Teachers* of the *Church*, and it is impoſſible they ſhould be *infallible*, who have ſo often actually erred even in Matters of the *higheſt* Moment. Suppoſe then what is fairly *ſuppoſable*, that your Teachers ſhould miſlead you, and not only in to *dangerous*, but *damnable* Errors; are you ſure that they ſhall be damned for you, and that you ſhall eſcape? If ſo, then *Hereſy* in the

the *Laity* can never be *damnable*, if they receive it upon Trust from their *Teachers*; and consequently, their Souls are as *safe* under the Conduct of *false Teachers* as *true*; provided always that, *right* or *wrong*, they believe what is taught them. But if yourselves must give an Account to *God* as well for your Faith as for your Manners, and are *liable* in your *own* Persons to *eternal* Damnation (as most certainly you are) as well for *Heresy* as *Immorality*, then it is the most *unreasonable* Thing in the World that you should in all Things be obliged to believe your *Teachers* upon Trust; for at this Rate a Man may be eternally *damned*, merely for believing what he is obliged to believe. If it be said that the *People* are not bound to believe what their *particular Pastor* teaches, but what the *Church* teaches them, and the *Church* cannot err, though their *particular Pastor* may; I would fain know how shall the *People* be otherwise informed what the *Church* teaches them than by the Expositions of their *particular Pastors*, they being at least as *incapable* of informing themselves what the Doctrine of the *Church* is, as what the Doctrine of the *Scripture* is; and therefore if their *Pastor* should err damnably in expounding to them what the *Church* teaches, as it is supposable he may if he be not *infallible*, there is no Remedy but they must err damnably in believing whatsoever their *Pastor* teaches. But we are farther told, that it is *sufficient* for the *People* that they believe in the *Gross*, that whatsoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, and that as for the *Particulars*, there is no Necessity

that

that they ſhould be informed about them; becauſe he who believes that all that the *Church* teaches is *true*, implicity believes all that is *neceſſary*, ſeeing the *Church* teaches all that is *neceſſary*. But the Miſchief of it is, that this *compendious* Way of Belief is utterly *inſignificant*, and doth no way comport with the Deſign and Intention of a *Chriſtian*'s Faith. For *God* doth not require our Faith merely for its *own* Sake, but in order to a farther End, that it may purify our Hearts, and Influence our Lives and Manners; that is, that the Matters which we believe might by being believed by us affect our Wills, and continually move and perſuade us to abſtain from *all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*; and if our Faith hath not this Effect upon us, St. *James* aſſures us that it is a *dead* Faith, and will profit us nothing. But how is it *poſſible* that our believing *ſuch* and *ſuch* Propoſitions ſhould move and perſuade us, if we do not know what thoſe Propoſitions are, and what is the *true* Senſe and Meaning of them? What Man can be perſuaded by ſuch Propoſals as he doth not underſtand, and of which he hath no Manner of *explicit* Knowledge? An *Heathen* that believes that whatſoever *God* teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that *Jeſus Chriſt* came from *God* to reveal his Will to Mankind, becauſe it is certain that *God* teaches this; but what is he the *better* for this his *implicit* Belief? What Influence can it have upon his Heart and Manners, who, perhaps, never heard of *Jeſus Chriſt*, nor of any *one* Propoſition which he revealed to the

World? And so he who believes that whatsoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that there shall be a *future Judgment*, a *Resurrection of the Dead*, and *an everlasting State of Happiness*, *or Misery*, *after Death*, because all these Things the *Church* teaches; but if he never hears of them, or hath no *explicit* Knowledge and Belief of them, how is it *possible* they should operate on his Will and Affections, or ever persuade him to be the *better* Man, or the *better Christian?* And the same is to be said of all the *other* Articles of *Christianity*. So that either we must believe to no Purpose, and content ourselves with an *insignificant* Faith that will not at all avail us; or take up our Faith upon Trust from *fallible* Teachers who may mislead us into *damnable* Errors, and if they should, we must be *liable* to answer for it in *our* Persons, and at our own *eternal* Peril; or, which is the Truth of the Case, we must be allowed to enquire, and judge for ourselves, at least, in all Things *necessary* to our *eternal* Salvation. Seeing therefore there are many Things in *Scripture* which the *Scripture* itself obliges me upon Pain of Damnation to believe; it hence necessarily follows, that so far forth as the *Scripture* obliges me to believe what it teaches, it obliges me to understand what it teaches, otherwise I must believe I know not what, which is impossible; and so far as the *Scripture* obliges me to understand what it teaches, it must oblige me to *search*, *enquire*, and *judge* what it teaches, because I cannot understand without enquiring and judging: But how can I

enquire

enquire what the *Scripture* teaches, if I cannot be admitted to read and consult the *Scripture?* And so again, there are many Duties in *Scripture*, which the *Scripture* itself obliges me to practise upon Pain of *eternal* Damnation; but how can it oblige me to practise what it doth not oblige me to understand? Or how can it oblige me to understand what it doth not oblige me to enquire after? But how can I enquire what it is that the *Scripture* obliges me to practise, when I am forbid all Access to it, and it is locked up from me in an *unknown* Tongue? In short, therefore, seeing the Things contained in *Scripture* are of the *highest* Moment to the *People*, and it is as much as their Souls are worth not to believe and practise what it teaches; and seeing they can neither believe nor practise what they do not understand, it is of *infinite* Concern to them so far at *least* to read, consult, and understand the *Scripture*, as they stand obliged to believe and practise its Doctrines and Precepts.

6. and *lastly*, From the *Universal* Sense of the *Primitive Church* in this Matter, it is also evident, that the *People* are obliged to read or acquaint themselves with the *Holy Scripture*. For the *Primitive Church* for above *six hundred* Years were so far from debarring the *People* the Use of the *Scripture*, that it continually urged and pressed it upon them as a Matter of *indispensible* Obligation. For so *Origen* wishes, That *all would do as it is written*, viz. *Search the Scriptures*. So also *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Hearken ye that are afar off, hearken ye that be near; the Word of God is hid from no*

Man: it is a Light common to all Men, and there is no Darkneſs in it. So alſo St. *Auſtin* *, *Think it not ſufficient that ye hear the Scriptures in the Church, but do you alſo read the Scriptures yourſelves in your own Houſes, or get ſome other to read them to you.* So alſo St. *Jerom* §, *The Lord hath ſpoken to us by his Goſpel, not that a few, but all ſhould underſtand.* And elſewhere, ſpeaking of the Women that were at *Bethlehem* with *Paula, It was not lawful,* ſaith he, *for any one of all the Siſters to be ignorant of the Pſalms, nor to paſs over any Day without learning ſome Part of the Scriptures.* And elſewhere †, *We are taught,* ſaith he, *That the Lay-People ought to have the Word of God not only ſufficiently, but alſo with Abundance, that ſo they may be able to teach and counſel others.* So alſo St. *Chryſoſtome* ‡, *Hear me, O Laity, get ye the Bible, the moſt wholſom Remedy for the Soul; and if ye will no more, at leaſt get the New Teſtament, St.* Paul's *Epiſtles, and the Acts, that they may be your continual and earneſt Teachers.* And elſewhere he affirms ||, *That it is more neceſſary for the Lay-People to read the Scriptures, than either for the Monks or Prieſts, or any others.* And to cite no more of the *infinite Authorities* of the *Fathers* to this Purpoſe, St. *Baſil* obſerves **, *The Scripture of God is like an Apothecary's Shop full of Medicines of ſundry ſorts, that ſo every Man may there chuſe a convenient Remedy for his Diſeaſe.* And

* In Orat. adhort. ad Gent. § In Pſal. 86. † Ep. ad Coloſſ. c. 3. ‡ Ep. ad Coloſ. Hom. 9. || In Mat. Hom. 3. ** In Pſal. 1.

And that the *People* as well as the *Prieſts* were then allowed the Uſe of the *Bible*, is evident from a *notorious* Matter of Fact; for when the *Roman Emperors* endeavoured to force the *Chriſtians* by Perſecution and Torments to deliver up their *Bibles* to be burnt, that ſo by extinguiſhing thoſe *Sacred* Records they might extinguiſh *Chriſtianity*, they examined not only the *Biſhops* and *Clergy*, but alſo the *People* of all Degrees and both Sexes; many of whom as well Women as Men, owned that they had *Bibles*, but rather choſe to die than to deliver them *up*; and many *others*, who to avoid Death, delivered up their *Bibles*, and are therefore branded with the *ignominious* Name of *Traditors*, for which they were excluded the *Communion of the Church*, and could not be re-admitted without a *long* and *ſevere* Penance. But it is impoſſible the *People* could have been *Traditors* if they had had no *Bibles* to deliver *up*; and therefore being ſo, is an *undeniable* Argument that the *People* were then allowed the Uſe of the *Scripture* as well as the *Prieſts*. And by the way, it's very *ſtrange* that any Community of *Chriſtians* ſhould think *that* a *proper* Way to extinguiſh *Hereſy*, which thoſe *Heathen Perſecutors* made uſe of to extinguiſh *Chriſtianity*. But that in thoſe *firſt* Ages theſe *People* were allowed the Uſe of the *Bible*, is a Caſe ſo *plain*, that they who of *later* Ages have thought meet to repeal this Allowance, have never been able to produce ſo much as one *probable* Colour of *Primitive* Authority to warrant their Practice. And though in *other* Points they not only claim but raviſh *Antiquity*

in deſpight of Modeſty, as well as Truth; yet here they are ſo abandoned of all Pretence to it, that they are not able to produce ſo much as *one* Paſſage of any *Primitive Father* that ſeems to diſcourage the *People* from reading the *Scripture*, and much *leſs* that forbids them ſo to do: And 'tis notorious to all the World, That in the *Primitive Ages*, when the *Latin* was the *vulgar* Language of the *Romans*, the *Bible* was tranſlated into that Language for the Uſe and Inſtruction of the *People*, but when through the many Incurſions of the *barbarous* Nations into the *Roman* Empire, this Language was worn out by Degrees, and inſtead of being the *vulgar*, became an *unknown* Tongue to that People; the *Governors* of that *Church*, having to ſerve their own ſecular Ends, introduced into it ſundry *corrupt* Doctrines and Practices which they feared the Light of the *Scripture* might detect to the *People*, they thought it moſt *adviſable* not to tranſlate it into the *new vulgar*, but to let it remain locked *up* from their Cognizance in the *Old Latin*, which by this Time very *few*, except the *Clergy*, underſtood. And when for ſome Time it had lain hid from them in an *unknown* Tongue, they proceeded at laſt wholly to forbid the Uſe of it to the Laity. So that about the *Ninth* and *Tenth* Ages, which all agree were over-caſt with *groſs* Darkneſs and Ignorance, the *Scriptures* were ſhut *up*, like the *Sybilline Oracles* in the *Capitol*, and none but the *Prieſts* were allowed to read and conſult them. And though upon the Commencement of the *Reformation*, the *Bible* was for ſome time

time ſet forth again in *ſundry vulgar* Languages among the *People*, yet did the *Guides* of that *Church* ſoon find it *neceſſary*, for Defence of their own *Unſcriptural* Doctrine and Practices to remit it to its *old* Confinement. For *Firſt*, The *Council of Trent*, in the *Fourth* Rule of their *Index Expurgatorius*, forbids the *Laity* to read, or ſo much as to have the *Bible* in the *Vulgar* Language, tho' tranſlated by thoſe of their own *Church*, without a Licence in Writing from the *Biſhop* of the Dioceſe, or the *Inquiſitor*; and this upon Pain of not receiving Abſolution of their Sins unleſs they delivered *up* thoſe their *Bibles* to their *Ordinary*. To which Rule, *Pope Clement the Eighth* afterwards added Obſervation, *That hitherto by the Command and Practice of the Holy Roman and Univerſal Inquiſition, the Faculty of granting ſuch Licences for reading or keeping Bibles in the Vulgar Tongue, or any Summaries or Hiſtorical Compendiums of the ſaid Bibles, is taken away; which is to be inviolably obſerved.* And in the *Index of Prohibited Books*, publiſhed by *Pope Alexander* the *Seventh*, not only thoſe *Bibles* that are tranſlated and printed by *Hereticks*, but alſo all *Bibles* in any *Vulgar* Tongue are abſolutely forbidden. And though, where the *Reformation* hath prevailed, they are forced againſt their *own* Laws more freely to indulge the Uſe of the *Scripture* to their *People*; yet in thoſe Countries where they are *ſole* Maſters, this Privilege is very rarely granted.

And now being thus *neceſſitated* to deprive the *People* of the Light of the *Scripture*, leſt

they should thereby discover their Errors and Corruptions, it was *necessary* for them to invent some *plausible* Pretences to justify a Practice so contrary both to *Scripture* and *Primitive* Antiquity, and so enormously *derogatory* to the *common* Right of *Christians*; and when it must be done, it is a very *hard* Case if Men of Wit and Learning cannot find something to say for any thing. Now the *two main* Pretences that are urged in this Case, are, *First*, That a *general* Permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a *wide* Door to *Errors* and *Heresies*: *Secondly*, That it will prove an *unavoidable* Occasion of *great* Corruptions in Manners.

1. That a *general* Permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a *wide* Door to *Errors* and *Heresies*; because there are many Things in *Scripture* which are *hard* to be understood, and which the *Unlearned*, who are *unqualified* to understand them *aright*, will be apt to wrest into a *wrong* Sense to their *own* Destruction. To which I answer,

1. That this Reason holds as *good* against the writing and publishing the *Scripture* at *first* in Languages that were vulgarly known to the *People*, as against the translating them now into the *vulgar* Languages. For the *Hebrew*, in which the *Old Testament* was written, was the *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*; and the *Greek*, in which the *New Testament* was written, was then the most *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*, and *Gentiles*; and yet notwithstanding there were the same *hard* Things *then* in

in the *Scripture* as *now*, and the *People* were as *unlearned* then, and as apt to wreſt theſe *hard Scriptures* to their *own* Deſtruction *then* as *now*; yet *God* notwithſtanding thought fit to write and publiſh it in Languages that were moſt *known* to the People: and therefore, either we muſt ſay, that he did not take that Care that he ought to have done to prevent *Errors* and *Hereſies*, or that this is no *good* Reaſon why the *People* ſhould be debarred of the *Scripture* in their own *vulgar* Language. For why ſhould not the Writing the *Scriptures* at *firſt* in the *vulgar* Languages as much open a Door to *Hereſies*, as the Tranſlating them afterwards, ſeeing it is neither their being written in the *vulgar* Language, nor their being tranſlated into the *vulgar* Language but their being in the *vulgar* Language, that is here pretended to ſet open this *dangerous* Door to *Hereſies*.

2. This Objection ſtrikes with *equal* Force againſt God's writing and publiſhing the *Scripture* to the *People*, as againſt their reading and conſulting it. For that *God* wrote theſe *Scriptures* to the *People*, and that in ſo doing, he not only gave them a Right, but alſo laid on them an Obligation to read them, I have already ſhewed. If therefore the Reading the *Scripture* by the *People* be ſuch an *unavoidable* Inlet of *Error* and *Hereſy*, as this Objection pretends, it was doubtleſs very unadviſedly done of *God* to publiſh ſuch a *dangerous* Book to the World; which thoſe for whom he publiſhed, and to whom he directed it, cannot familiarly converſe with without *imminent* Peril of being infected with

with *Hereſy*. And if the *Scripture* be ſuch a *quarrelſome* Knife as theſe Men ſay it is, that the *People* can hardly touch it without cutting their Fingers, they are certainly more beholden to the *Church* for taking it from them, than they are to *God* for beſtowing it on them.

3. This Objection makes as much at leaſt againſt the *Prieſts* reading the *Scripture* as the *People*. For moſt of thoſe *Hereſies* that have been broached to the *People* were *firſt* brewed by the *Prieſts*, from whoſe Lips the *People* do commonly derive their *Errors*, as well as their *Knowledge:* Witneſs thoſe *famous Hereſies* with which the *Chriſtian* World hath been ſo diſtracted from *one* Generation to *another*, ſuch as the *Novatian*, the *Donatiſt*, the *Arian*, the *Pelagian*, the *Eutichian*, the *Eunomian*; all which Counterfeits, and a great many more, were *firſt* coined by the *Clergy*, and diſperſed for *current Chriſtianity* among the *Laity*. And therefore, if this Pretence, that the Reading of *Scripture* opens a Gap to *Hereſy*, be a *ſufficient* Reaſon why the *Laity* ſhould not read it, it is a much more *ſufficient* Reaſon why the *Clergy* ſhould not read it. For it requires Skill and Learning as well to wreſt the *Scripture* into ſuch *falſe* Senſes as are likely to impoſe upon the World, as to interpret it into its *true* Senſe; and I am very ſure that it ordinarily requires more Wit and Art to extort from the *Scripture probable* Errors, than it doth to diſcover by it *neceſſary* Truth; and if ſo, then if the Danger of letting in *Hereſies* is a *true* Reaſon why any ſhould not read it, it is much more a *true* Reaſon why the *Learned* ſhould

not

not read it than the *Unlearned*; and conſequently why the *Prieſts* ſhould not read it than the *People*, ſeeing the *former* are more qualified to extract *Hereſies* from it than the *latter*. If therefore this Objection ſignifies any Thing, it muſt be this, That it is a very *dangerous* thing for any Body to read the *Bible*; that this ſame *Divine* Book, which *God* thought fit to publiſh to the World, and which the *Primitive Church* thought fit to oblige all that were able to peruſe and ſtudy, is now become ſuch a *dangerous* Inlet of *Hereſy*, that like *Pandora*'s *Box*, you can no ſooner open it, but Swarms of *Errors* and *Falſe Doctrines* will preſently fly abroad into the World; ſo that it would be very well for the World if it were either utterly extinguiſhed, or hid in ſome *inacceſſible* Repoſitory, where no *Mortal* Eye might ever approach it.

4. This Objection expreſly contradicts our *Saviour*, and the *Primitive Fathers*. For *Mat.* xxii. 29. our *Saviour* tells the *Sadducees*, who were cavilling with him about the Reſurrection, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* Had therefore the *Sadducees* been of the ſame Mind with our *Objectors*, they would doubtleſs have told him, *by your good Leave, Sir, in this Point you yourſelf are in an Error; for in all Probability had we known the Scripture, or been intimately acquainted with it, we ſhould have erred much more.* Either therefore our *Saviour* was miſtaken in charging the Error of the *Sadducees* upon their Ignorance of *Scripture*, or our *Objectors* are miſtaken in making it ſo *neceſſary* an Expedient for the Prevention

vention of Error to forbid the *People* being acquainted with *Scripture*; for 'tis plain *He* and *They* are of *quite different* Opinions in the Case. But whatever their Opinion is, I am sure the *Primitive Fathers* were of the same Opinion with our *Saviour:* For *Irenæus* writing of the *Valentinian Hereticks*, All those Errors they fall into, because they know not the Scriptures.* So St. *Jerom* †, *We must search the Scriptures with all Diligence, that so as being good Exchangers, we may know the lawful Coin from the Copper.* And elsewhere, *That infinite Evils arise from Ignorance of the Scriptures, and that from this Cause the greatest Part of Heresies have proceeded.* St. *Chrysostom* is of Opinion, *that if Men would be conversant with the Scriptures and attend to them, they would not only not fall into Errors themselves, but be able to rescue those that are deceived; and that the Scriptures would instruct Men both in right Opinions, and good Life.* And to name no more, *Theophilact* tells us, *that nothing can deceive them who search the Holy Scriptures; for that*, saith he, *is the Candle whereby the Thief is discovered.* But it seems, according to *modern* Experiments, this Candle of *Scripture* rather serves to light the Thief into the House, than to discover him when he is there; and therefore it is thought *necessary* for *honest* Mens Security, either that it should be wholly extinguished, or at least hindered from giving Light by being shut *up* in a *dark Lanthorn* of an *unknown* Tongue. But when they who were once the *honest* Men are become the *Thieves*, it

* Lib. 3. c. 12. † In Ep. ad Ephes. l. 3. c. 4.

it is no wonder that they ſhould thus change their Note, and complain of the Light of this Candle as *dangerous* to them, which *heretofore* they eſteemed their *greateſt* Security. I am ſure the Reaſon aſſigned by St. *Peter* why ſome Men wreſted the *Scriptures* to their *own* Deſtruction, was not their reading the *Scripture*, but contrariwiſe, their not reading it enough, *which they that are unlearned*, ſaith he, *wreſt to their own Deſtruction*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. *Unlearned* in what? Why doubtleſs in the *Holy Scripture*. For as to *human* Learning, St. *Peter* himſelf was as *unlearned* as they; and if it was their being *unlearned* in *Scripture* that occaſioned them to wreſt it into an *heretical* Senſe, then it is not Mens reading the *Scripture* that leads them into *Hereſy*, but their not reading it enough. To ſay therefore that the Peoples reading the *Scripture* is an Inlet of *Hereſy*; and to ſay, no it is not their reading it, but their not reading it enough is the Inlet of Hereſy, is an *expreſs* Contradiction; the *former* our *Objectors* ſay; the *latter* our *Saviour*, his *Apoſtles*, and the *Primitive Church* ſay; and I think it is no *hard* Matter to determine which of theſe *two* Contradictions we ought to believe.

5. and *laſtly*, According to this Objection, the *beſt* Way to keep Men from being *Hereticks* is to deprive them of all Means of arriving at the Knowledge of the Truth: And this, I confeſs, is a very *certain* Way; though not a very *honeſt* one. Let Men know nothing of *Religion*, and to be ſure they cannot be *Hereticks*, it being *impoſſible* for Men to err in their Conceptions

ceptions of thoſe Things whereof they have no Notion. Put out a Man's Eyes, and you certainly prevent his being impoſed upon by *falſe* Mediums of Sight to miſtake *one* Colour or Figure for *another*; and yet I fancy moſt Men would think this a *cruel* Kind of Courteſy. But if Men muſt not be allowed *Scripture* to inſtruct them in the Truth, for this Reaſon, becauſe it may occaſionally miſlead them into *Errors* and *Hereſies*, then they muſt be allowed no Means of Inſtruction that may occaſion them to err, and conſequently no Means at all, there being no *imaginable* Means of Inſtruction which may not be an Occaſion of *Errors* and *Hereſies*. Is the *Scripture* itſelf in its *own* Nature an Occaſion of miſleading Men into *Hereſy*, or not? If you ſay it is, conſider before you ſay it, how it could conſiſt with the Truth and Veracity of *God*, to publiſh ſuch a Book to the World as tends in its *own* Nature to ſeduce and miſlead the Underſtandings of thoſe that read it. If you ſay it is not *ſo* in itſelf, but only that it may be ſo accidentally, I would fain know what Means of Inſtruction is there which may not accidentally become an Occaſion of miſleading Men into *Hereſy*; and therefore if this be a *ſufficient* Reaſon to deprive Men of *Scripture*, it is *ſufficient* to deprive them of all *other* Means of Inſtruction. And ſeeing the Knowledge of *Religion* is the Food of Mens Souls, to keep them in Ignorance for fear they ſhould err, is to deny them Food for fear they ſhould ſurfeit. There is no Doubt but Men whoſe Minds are tinctured with *heretical* Pravity, will be apt enough to extract the Poiſon of

of *Error* out of the *cleareſt* Conveyances and Diſcoveries of Truth; but what then? Do not *bad* Men ordinarily apply the *beſt* Things to the *worſt* Purpoſes? If Men fall into *Hereſy* by reading the *Scripture*, where lies the Fault? Not in the *Scripture* ſure, no *Chriſtian* will pretend that; and if it be in themſelves, in their *Pride*, or *Vain-Glory*, or *Covetouſneſs*, or *Senſuality*, (as it is demonſtrable it is) is it *juſt* that *all* ſhould be deprived of it, becauſe *ſome ill* Men have made an *ill* Uſe of it? Some Men have ſurfeited by Eating and Drinking, is it *juſt* that all Mankind therefore ſhould be deprived of Meat and Drink? Suppoſe a Prince, pretending to be an *infallible Geographer*, ſhould iſſue out a Proclamation commanding all his Subjects to travel at *Midnight*, and ſhould aſſign *this* as the Reaſon of it, that he had been certainly informed that *ſeveral* of them had loſt their Way at *Noon*, and wandered into Bogs and Precipices by the Light of the Sun; would any *one* imagine *this* to be the *true* Reaſon, or rather would not every *one* believe that his *true* Deſign was to keep his People in Ignorance of the Roads and Situation of his Country, that ſo they might never be able to diſcover the Errors of his Maps, which would perhaps diſcover him to be not only a *fallible Geographer*, but alſo a very *erroneous* one? And where the *People* are forbid travelling in the Light of the *Scripture*, whatever may be pretended, *wiſe* Men will believe that the *true* Reaſon is not to prevent the Peoples falling into *Errors*, but to prevent the diſcovering the *Errors* of thoſe to whoſe Guidance and Direction

tion they are wholly and ſolely ſubjected. And this I conceive is a *ſufficient* Anſwer to the *firſt* Objection, *viz.* That the Allowance of the *Scripture* to the *People*, is a *dangerous* Inlet of *Error* and *Hereſy*, I proceed therefore to the Second, which is this;

Object. 2. That there are *many* Things recorded in *Scripture* which are very *apt* to ſuggeſt *lewd* Thoughts to the People, and thereby to corrupt their Manners; as particularly the many *bad* Examples therein related, which are of a very *contagious* Nature, and conſequently *dangerous* for the *People* to converſe with. In anſwer to which I deſire theſe *four* Things may be ſeriouſly conſidered.

1. That this *Objection* ſtrikes as much againſt the *Scripture* itſelf as againſt the Peoples reading it. For what *worſe* Thing can be ſaid of the *Scripture* than this, that it is ſuch an *infectious* Book, ſo *apt* to excite *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds, and to kindle *lewd* Affections in their Hearts, that it is by no Means fit the *People* ſhould read it? Should this be ſaid to a *Turk*, or a *Heathen*, who had never read *one* Word in the *Bible*, he would certainly conclude it to be nothing but a *Canto of Ribaldries*, written for no *other* End but to provoke and entertain the *laſcivious* Inclinations of Mankind. And certainly had our *Objectors* but as much Reverence for this *Holy Book* as they pretend, they would rather oblige their *People* to read it than with-hold it from them, upon a Pretence that doth ſo ſcandalouſly reflect upon its Reputation. If there be any ſuch Paſſages in *Scripture* as are *apt* to ſtart *lewd* Thoughts in Mens Minds,

Minds, the utmoſt that can be fairly pretended, is, That thoſe Paſſages ought to have been left out of the Peoples *Bibles*, or at leaſt to have been left *untranſlated:* But to urge *this* as a Reaſon, why all the reſt of the *Scripture* ſhould be denied to the *People*, inſinuates, as if the *whole* were nothing elſe but a *mere* Kennel of *contagious* Obſcenities. For to urge that for a *Reaſon*, why the *Scripture* in *general* ſhould not be read by, or to the *People*, (which at moſt is only a Reaſon why ſome *few* Paſſages of it ſhould not be read by them) is to ſuppoſe the whole *Scripture* to be made *up* of ſuch Paſſages as are *apt* to infuſe *vicious* Thoughts into the *People*; than which what can there be ſuppoſed more *falſe* in itſelf, or more *derogatory* to the *Scripture?*

2. This *Objection*, if it proves any thing, doth as well prove that it was *unfit* for *God* to publiſh the *Scripture* to the *People*, as it is for the *People* to read it. For is it fit, that *He, who is a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, ſhould publiſh ſuch things to the World as are *apt* to engender *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds? And yet though Mens Minds were as *apt* to imbibe *impure* Thoughts when theſe Things were *firſt* publiſhed, as they are now, this hindered not *God* from publiſhing them to the World in ſuch Languages as are beſt *known* and *underſtood* by the *People*. Either therefore *God* did not ſo well know what is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds as our *wiſe* Objectors; or he was *leſs* concerned than they to preſerve them from being corrupted; or what

they object is both *false* and *scandalous*. For to say, That the *wise* and *holy God* hath published such Things to the World as his Ministers find *necessary* to conceal from the World, lest its Thoughts should be corrupted by them, is in effect to say, that his Ministers are grown *wiser* than he, or are more concerned for the Interest of Holiness than he. If the *vicious* Examples, for instance, that are recorded in *Scripture*, are more *apt* to deprave Men than to instruct them, what need they have been recorded? What is there in the *mere* Story of *Noah*'s Drunkenness and Incest, and *David*'s Adultery, considered abstractly from the *good* Instructions it gives, that should move *God* to deliver it down to all *future* Posterity? If it serve no *good* Ends, it is recorded to a *bad* Purpose; and therefore, if for this Reason, because it is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds, the *Church* be obliged to conceal it now, for the very same Reason *God* was obliged to have concealed it *for ever*. Either therefore we must say that *God* did very *ill* in publishing it, or that the *Church* doth very *ill* in suppressing it; for *God* could have no *other* End in publishing it to the World, but only to instruct the World by it. If therefore it be not *instructive*, *God* was mistaken; but if it be, it is *fit* the World should be acquainted with it.

3. That this *Objection* doth expressly contradict the *Scripture* itself: For whereas it tells us, that the *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* would be apt to deprave the Peoples Minds and Manners, St. *Paul* tells us the quite contrary:

trary: *These Things were our Examples, to the Intent we should not lust after evil Things, as they* (i. e. the *Israelites* in the Wilderness) *lusted: Neither be ye Idolaters as were some of them: Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one Day three and twenty Thousand: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer: Now all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples; and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come,* 1 Cor. x. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Whereas this *Objection* urges that there are *sundry* Passages in *Scripture*, which should the *People* read, would excite *evil* Thoughts in their Minds; the same St. *Paul* tells us, *That all Scripture is profitable*, not only *for Doctrine* and *Reproof*, but also *for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Whereas this *Objection* pretends, that it would be very *unsafe*, for *young People* especially, to be allowed the *Scripture*, because there are several *amorous* Stories and Passages in it which will be apt to suggest *wanton* Thoughts to their *gay* and *amorous* Fancies; *David*, it is plain, was of a quite *contrary* Mind; for *wherewith*, saith he, *shall a young Man cleanse his Ways? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.* Psalm cxix. 9; than which two Passages, what Assertions can be more contrary *one* to *another?*

4, and *laſtly*, That ſuppoſing this *Objection* to be thus far *true*, that there are ſome Paſſages in *Scripture* which may ſometimes occaſionally excite *bad* Thoughts in Mens Minds, yet this is no *juſt* Reaſon why the Uſe of *Scripture* ſhould be forbid to the *People*. For every thing which the *People* occaſionally make *bad* Uſes of, is for that Reaſon to be forbid to them; even *Prayer* and the *Sacraments*, and the *Profeſſion* of *Chriſtianity* ought to be forbidden them as well as the *Scripture*, ſeeing of the *one* as well as of the *other*, many *People* do occaſionally make very *bad* Uſes. So long as the *Scripture* is *good* in itſelf, and *apt* in its *own* Nature to inſtruct and edify thoſe that read it, this is *ſufficient* not only to warrant the Peoples Uſe of it, but to enjoin and require it, and if it ſometimes occaſions *corrupt* Thoughts in *corrupt* Minds, this is no more a Reaſon why the *People* ſhould be deprived of the Light of it, than ſome *bad* Mens making ill Uſe of the Light of the Sun is, why the Sun ſhould be extinguiſhed, or why the *People* ſhould be *for ever* ſhut *up* from the Light of it in *dark* and *diſmal* Dungeons. But as for thoſe very Paſſages in *Scripture*, which do ſometimes occaſion *ill* Thoughts in Mens Minds, they are ſo far from doing it of their *own* Natures, that as they are delivered in *Scripture*, there is nothing more naturally *apt* to repreſs *bad* Thoughts, and to arm and fortify Mens Minds againſt them. As for inſtance, the *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* are generally delivered with *infamous* Characters,

ters, *ſevere* Prohibitions, and *dreadful* Inſtances of God's Vengeance attending them, which render them much more *apt* to repreſs than to excite *evil* Thoughts in Mens Minds; to quicken them to *Prayer* and *Watchfulneſs* againſt Temptations, and when at any Time they have been overcome by them, to encourage them to Repentance; or when they have overcome them, to ſtir them *up* to *grateful* Acknowledgment of that *preventing* and *aſſiſting* Grace of God, by which they have been enabled to reſiſt and repel them. Theſe are the *natural* Uſes of thoſe *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture*; and therefore, if inſtead of making theſe Uſes of them, ſome Men pervert them to *bad* Purpoſes, that is *their* Faults and not the *Scripture*'s. It is *ſufficient* that the *bad* Examples in *Scripture*, as they are there recorded, are in themſelves of *excellent* Uſe to the *People*; but ſhould Men be deprived of the Uſe of every *good* Thing they abuſe, I would fain know what one *good* Thing would be left free to their Enjoyment. And now having proved at large the Peoples Right and Obligation to uſe and ſearch the *Holy Scripture*, and anſwered the *main Objections* againſt it, I ſhall conclude with theſe two Inferences from thoſe.

1. If the *People* were obliged to acquaint themſelves with *Scripture*, then they are obliged to receive upon the Authority of *Scripture* thoſe *divine* Truths which it pro-

poſes to their Belief. For to what *other* End ſhould we be obliged to read and conſult the *Word of God*, but only that we may learn from it what is his Mind and Will? But how ſhould we learn from *Scripture* what God's Mind is, if we are not to believe what he herein declares upon *Scripture* Authority? If I muſt not believe when I read the *Scripture* that this is God's Mind, becauſe the *Scripture* ſays ſo, it is *impoſſible* I ſhould ever learn God's Mind by reading it; and conſequently I am obliged to read it to *no* Purpoſe: For there is nothing can teach me what God's Mind is, but that which gives me *ſufficient* Ground to believe that what it teaches is the Mind of *God*. When therefore I read the *Scripture*, and find ſuch a Propoſition plainly aſſerted in it, is this a *ſufficient* Ground or no, for me to believe it to be the Mind of *God?* If it be, then the Authority of *Scripture* is a *ſufficient* Ground for my Belief; if it be not, then the *Scripture* cannot teach me what God's Mind is; becauſe it cannot give me *ſufficient* Ground to believe any *one* Propoſition in it to be the Mind of *God*. We are told indeed, that we are not to receive the Senſe of the *Scripture* from the *Scripture*, but from the *Church*, who alone hath Authority to expound it to us, and whoſe Expoſitions in all Matters of Faith are *infallible*. But if this be ſo, to what End ſhould we read the *Scripture*, ſeeing the only End of Reading is to learn the Senſe of what we read, which according to this Principle is not to be learnt from *Scripture?* So that

that though there be no other *wiſe* End of reading the *Scripture*, but only to learn from it what it means, yet it ſeems, for Men to read it for this End is a *perfect* Labour-in-vain; ſeeing it is not from the *Scripture* but from the *Church* that they are to learn the Meaning of *Scripture*. For as for the *Scripture*, if theſe Men are to be believed, it is nothing but a Heap of *unſenſed Characters*; ſo they expreſly term it: But what do they mean by it? Is it that the *Scripture* conſiſts of a Company of Letters, and Syllables, and Words, that carry with them no *determinate* Senſe, that *God Almighty* hath written and publiſhed a Book to the World that means nothing? If ſo, then when the *Church* by its *infallible* Authority pretends to expound the *Scripture*, her Meaning is not to expound the Senſe of it, but to impoſe a Senſe on it which was never in it; for how can ſhe expound the Senſe of a Book which hath no Senſe in it? If the *Church* is to expound the Senſe of *Scripture*, the *Scripture* muſt have a *certain determinate* Senſe in it before ſhe expounds it; for to expound the Senſe of *that* which hath no Senſe, is Nonſenſe: And if the *Scripture* hath a *certain* Senſe in it antecedently to the *Church*'s Expoſition of it, why do they call it a Parcel of *unſenſed Characters?* If their Meaning be only this, that the Senſe of *Scripture* as it is delivered in *Scripture*, is ſo *obſcure* and *ambiguous*, that without the *infallible* Expoſition of the *Church*, we can never be *certain* what

it is; besides, that this is notoriously *false*, the *Scripture* in all *necessary* Points, both of Faith and Manners, being so very *plain* and *clear*, that any Man that reads it with an *unprejudiced* Mind, may be as *certain* of the Sense of it, as he can be of the Sense of any Writing, and consequently of the Sense of any *written* Exposition of the *Church*; besides this, I say, it is *evident*, that whatever these Men pretend, it is not merely because of the *Obscurity* of *Scripture* that they oblige Men to ground their Faith upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*; for they own as well as we, that in many Things the *Scripture* is very *plain* and *clear*, and yet they will by no Means allow Men to ground their Belief of these Things upon the Authority of *Scripture*, but all must be resolved into the Authority of the *Church*. By which it is evident, that if all the *Scripture* were as *plain* as the *plainest Scriptures* they would still contend for the Necessity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*; and consequently that the *true* Reason why they contend for it, is not because the *Scripture* is *obscure*, but because they are resolved to advance the *Church*'s Authority. We own as well as they, that where the *Scripture* is *obscure*, Men ought to be guided by the Authority of the *Church*, which we freely allow to be the *best* Expositor of *Scripture*. But the *true* State of the Difference between *them* and *us*, is this, that whereas we require *plain* Men to judge of *plain* Things with their *own* Understandings, and all Men so far forth

forth as they are *capable*, to judge for themſelves in Matters of *Religion*, and not content themſelves to ſee with the *Church*'s Eyes, where they are able to ſee with their *own*; nothing will ſatisfy theſe Men, but to have all Men, as well *Wiſe* as *Simple*, ſurrender *up* their Faith and Judgment to the *Church*, and wink *hard*, and believe whatever the *Church* believes, purely becauſe the *Church* believes it. Whatever they pretend therefore, the Truth of the Caſe is this; They will by no Means allow us to believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*; not becauſe the *Scripture* is *obſcure*, (though this they pretend, for were it never ſo *plain* the Caſe would be the ſame) but becauſe they are *ſenſible* that this will inevitably ſubvert their *uſurped* Dominion over the Faith and Conſciences of Men. But we muſt believe upon the Authority of the *Church*; and who is this *Church* I beſeech you? Why they themſelves are this *Church*. So that whereas *God* hath publiſhed a Book called the *Bible*, on purpoſe to declare his Mind and Will to the World, here are ſtarted up a ſort of Men that call themſelves the *Church*, who very gravely tell us; *Sirs, You muſt not ſo much as look into this Book, or if you do, muſt not believe any one Word in it upon its own Credit and Authority. For though we do confeſs it is the Word of God, yet we are the ſole Judges of the Senſe of it; and therefore whatſoever we declare is its Senſe, how unlikely ſoever it may ſeem to you, you are bound*

bound in Conscience to receive and believe it for this very Reason, because we declare it. In short, you must resign up your Eyes, your Faith, your Reason, and Understanding to us, and see only with our Eyes, and believe only with our Faith, and judge only with our Judgment; and whithersoever we shall think fit to lead you, you must tamely follow us, without presuming to examine whether we lead you right or wrong. But yet after all, to induce us thus to enslave our Understandings to them, they themselves are fain to appeal to *Scripture*, and allow us in some Things to judge of the Sense of it, and to believe those Things upon its Authority. For no *wise* and *honest* Man will ever believe, either that they are the *Church*, or the *infallible* Judges of the Sense of *Scripture*, without some Proof and Evidence; and for this they are fain to produce several Texts of *Scripture*, such as, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church.* Now supposing that to be *true*, which is notoriously *false*, *viz.* That those Texts do necessarily imply that they are the only *true Catholick Church*, and that as such they are constituted by God *infallible* Judges of *Scripture*; yet before I can believe so, I must judge for myself whether this be the Sense of them or no; and if I judge it is, I must believe that they are the *Church*, and *infallible* upon the *Scripture*'s Authority and not theirs; for their Authority is the Thing in debate, and I cannot believe upon it before I believe it. So then, though

we

we muſt believe nothing elſe upon *Scripture* Authority, yet upon this very Authority we muſt believe that they are the *Church*, and that they are *infallible*, which are the *fundamental* Principles of their *Religion*; that is to ſay, we muſt believe as much upon *Scripture* Authority as will ſerve their turn, and no more. But may I be *certain* of the Truth of theſe *two Fundamental* Principles upon *Scripture* Authority or no? If I may, why may I not as well be infallibly *certain* upon the ſame Authority of *other* Principles of *Chriſtianity* as well as thoſe, ſeeing there are no *common* Principles of *Chriſtian Religion* but what are at leaſt as plainly revealed in *Scripture* as theſe. But this will ſpoil all; for if Men may be infallibly certain of the Principles of *Religion* upon *Scripture* Authority, what will become of the Neceſſity of Mens relying upon the *Chucrh*, which is founded upon this Principle, that Men can arrive at no *infallible* Certainty in *Religion* by relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*, or indeed any *other* Authority but the *Church*'s? But if I cannot be infallibly *certain* of thoſe *two* Principles, *viz.* that they are the *Church*, and *Infallible*, by thoſe Authorities of *Scripture* which they urge to prove them, how can I be infallibly *certain* of any thing that they declare and define? For if I am not *certain* that they are the *Church*, for all I know the *Church* may be *infallible*, and yet they may be miſtaken; and if I am not *certain* that they are *infallible*,

fallible, for all I know they may be the *Church*, and yet ſtill be miſtaken. In ſhort, no Authority can render me *infallibly certain*, but that which is *infallible*; no *Infallibility* can render me *infallibly certain*, but that of which I have an *infallible* Certainty. Either therefore the *Scripture* can render me infallibly *certain* of the *Infallibility* of their *Church* (and if it cannot, I am ſure nothing can) or it cannot; if it can, why may it not as well render me infallibly *certain* of *other* Principles of *Chriſtianity*, which are at leaſt as plainly revealed in it as that? If I cannot, how can I be infallibly *certain* that any thing ſhe defines and declares to me is true? If then the Authority of *Scripture* can give us an *infallible* Certainty, we have as *juſt* a Pretence to it as they, it being upon this Authority that we ground our Faith; if it cannot, neither they nor we can juſtly pretend to it; becauſe they cannot otherwiſe be infallibly *certain* of their *own Infallibility* but by *Scripture*. But the Truth of it is, *God* never intended either that *they* or *we* ſhould be infallibly *certain* in the Matters of our *Religion*; for after all the Means of Certainty that he hath given us, he ſtill ſuppoſes that we may err, and plainly tells us that there muſt be *Hereſies*, and that even from among the Members of the *true Church*, where *infallible* Certainty is (if it be any where) there ſhould ariſe *falſe Teachers*, who ſhould bring in *damnable* Doctrines; which could never have happened, if he had left any ſuch Means to his

Church

Church as ſhould render her Children infallibly *certain.* All that he deſigned was to leave us ſuch *ſufficient* Means of *Certainty* in *Religion,* as that we might nor err either dangerouſly or damnably without *our own* Fault. He hath left us his Word, and in that hath plainly diſcovered to us all that is *neceſſary* for us to believe in order to *eternal* Life. He hath left us a *ſtanding* Miniſtry in his *Church* to explain his *Word* to us, and to guide us in the Paths of Righteouſneſs and Truth; but ſtill he requires us to ſearch the *one,* and attend to the *other* with *honeſt, humble,* and *teachable* Minds; and if we do not, we may err not only dangerouſly but damnably, and it is but *fit* and *juſt* we ſhould. But if we diligently ſearch the *Scripture,* and faithfully rely upon its Authority, without doing of which we ſearch it in vain; if we ſincerely attend to the *publick* Miniſty, with Minds prepared to receive the Truth in the Love of it; tho' we may poſſibly err in Matters of *leſs* Moment, yet as to all things *neceſſary* to our *eternal* Salvation, our Faith ſhall be inviolably ſecur'd; and this is as much as any *honeſt* Man needs, or as any *honeſt Church* can promiſe.

2. From hence alſo I infer, that in the Matters of our *Faith* and *Religion, God* doth expect that we ſhould make uſe of *our own* Reaſon and Judgment. For to what End ſhould he put us upon ſearching the *Scriptures,* but that thereby we may inform ourſelves what thoſe Things are which he hath required us to believe and

and practiſe ? But if it were his Mind that we ſhould wholly rely upon the Authority of our *Church*, or of our *Spiritual Guides*, and ſubmit our Faith to their Dictates without any Examination, what a *needleſs* and *impertinent* Imployment would this be for us, to ſearch and conſult the *Scriptures ?* Conſult them, for what, if we are not to follow their Guidance and Direction, and to take the Meaſures of our Faith and Manners from them ? And if for this End *God* hath obliged us to conſult them, (as to be ſure it can be for no *other* End) then he hath obliged us to employ *our own* Reaſon and Judgment, to conſider what they ſay, and enquire what they mean ; otherwiſe he hath obliged us to conſult them to no Purpoſe. It is as evident therefore that *God* will have us uſe *our own* Reaſon and Judgment in diſcerning what we are to believe, and what not, in *Religion*, and not *lazily* rely upon *others* to *ſee* and *diſcern*, and *believe* for us, as it is that he would have us ſearch and conſult the *Scriptures* ; and that I think is evident enough, from what hath been ſaid, to any one that is not reſolved not to admit of a Conviction. And indeed ſeeing our Reaſon is the *nobleſt* Faculty we have, it would be very ſtrange if *God* ſhould not allow it to intermeddle in the *higheſt* and moſt *important* Affair wherein he hath engaged us ; and ſeeing it is our Reaſon only that renders us *capable* of *Religion*, what an *odd* thing would it be for *God* to forbid us making uſe of our Reaſon in the moſt *important* Concerns of *Religion*, that is, in diſtinguiſhing what is *true*

Religion

Religion from what is *falſe*, and what we ought to believe from what we ought to reject? I know it is pretended by thoſe who urge the *abſolute* Neceſſity of ſubmitting our Reaſon to the *Church*, that they allow Men to make uſe of their *own* Reaſon and Judgment in diſcovering which the *true Church* is, and that all they contend for is only this, that when once Men have found the *true Church*, they ought to enquire no farther, but immediately to deliver up their Reaſon and Underſtanding to it, and believe every thing it believes without any farther Examination. So that before Men come into their *Church*, it ſeems they are allowed to ſee for themſelves, but after they are *in*, they muſt wink and follow their Guides, and depute them to ſee and underſtand for them; which to ſuch Men as are not quite *ſick* of their *own* Reaſon and Underſtandings, ſhould methinks be a *great* Temptation to keep them out of their *Church for ever*: For if I may judge for myſelf while I am *out* of it, but muſt not while I am *in* it, I muſt be very *fond* of parting with my *own* Eyes and Reaſon if ever I come *into* it at all. But ſuppoſe I was always *in* it, and had been bred *up* in its Communion from my Infancy, will they allow me when I come to the *full* uſe of my Reaſon fairly to queſtion whether theirs be the only *true Church* or no, and to hear the Reaſons, and examine the *Scriptures*, and conſult the Doctors on both ſides? No, by no means; this I am forbid under the Penalty of being deprived of the Benefit or *Prieſtly Abſolution*.

Abſolution. So that in ſhort, they will allow me to make uſe of my Reaſon if I have been bred an *Heretick* in order to my Reconciliation to their *Church*, but if I have never been an *Heretick*, I muſt never uſe my Reaſon to examine the Truth either of my *Church* or *Religion*; that is to ſay, I may uſe my Reaſon when there is no *other* Remedy, and I muſt continue a *Heretick* if I do not: But it were much better that I had never had Occaſion to uſe my Reaſon at all. So that according to theſe Men, the uſe of our Reaſon in *Religion* is only the *leaſt* of *two* Evils; it is not ſo *bad* as to continue a *Heretick*, but if I had never been one it would be very *bad*, and a *certain* Way to make me one; which methinks looks very *odd*, that the Uſe of my Reaſon ſhould be *neceſſary* to reduce me from *Hereſy*, and the Diſuſe of it as *neceſſary*, when I am reduced, to preſerve me from relapſing into *Hereſy*. 'Tis a *memorable* Paſſage of the *Biſhop of* St. *Mark* in the *Council of Trent*, *that Seculars are obliged humbly to obey that Doctrine of Faith which is given them by the Church, without diſputing or thinking farther of it.* Where by the *Church*, he means the *Clergy* aſſembled in that *Council.* So that according to this Man's Doctrine, the Faith of the *People* is a *meer* Beaſt of Burthen, that *right* or *wrong* muſt bear all the Load that the *Prieſts* ſhall agree to lay upon it; and though it ſhould feel itſelf *oppreſſed* by them with never ſuch *groſs* Contradictions or Abſurdities, it muſt think no farther of it, but tamely

tamely trudge on without ſtarting or boggling At this Rate what Tricks may not the *Prieſts* play with the Faith of the *People?* Let them invent what Doctrines they pleaſe to ſerve the Intereſt of their *own* Ambition and Covetouſneſs, the *People* muſt believe them without aſking *why*; or if they ſhould aſk why, they muſt expect no *other* Anſwer but this, becauſe we have thought fit to define and declare them. For it is by no Means *allowable* that the *People* ſhould exerciſe any *private* Judgment of their *own*, about Matters of Faith; no, I confeſs it is not, where the Matters propoſed to their Faith are *falſe* and *erroneous*; becauſe it is a *thouſand* to one but *one* Time or *other* the *People* will diſcover the Frauds and Impoſtures of the *Prieſts*, and this would ſpoil all. But if the Matters of Faith are *true*, in all Probability the farther the *People* enquire into them, the better they will be ſatisfied about them; and if in the Exerciſe of their *private* Judgments they ſhould in ſome *Particulars* err, that is far more *tolerable* than that they ſhould be utterly deprived of the Means of being able to give an Anſwer to every one that aſks them a Reaſon of the Hope that is in them. But when *God* hath given the People *reaſonable* Faculties on Purpoſe that by them they may be able to diſtinguiſh what is *true* from what is *falſe*, for any Party of Men to forbid them the Uſe of theſe Faculties in diſtinguiſhing what is *true* from what is *falſe* in *Religion*, in which above all Things they are moſt highly concerned, it is a moſt *injurious* Uſurpation upon

the *common* Rights of *human* Nature. For by this Means our *beſt* Faculty is rendered *uſeleſs* to us in our *greateſt* Concerns; and whereas *God* gave it to us on Purpoſe to guide and direct us, we are utterly deprived of its Guidance where we have moſt need of it, and where it will prove moſt *fatal* to us if we ſhould happen to err and go aſtray.

A

DISSUASIVE

FROM

APOSTACY.

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1 TIM. i. 19.

Holding Faith and a good Conſcience; which ſome having put away, concerning Faith have made Shipwreck.

THESE Words are a Part of St. *Paul*'s Charge to his Son *Timothy*, wherein he pathetically exhorts him as a *valiant Biſhop*, to take all *poſſible* Care to preſerve the Purity of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine in his Dioceſe of *Epheſus*, which at that Time abounded with *falſe* Teachers, whoſe Buſineſs it was to ſow the Tares of Hereſy and *falſe* Doctrine in that *large* and *fruitful* Field, the Cultivation whereof St. *Paul* had committed to his Charge. And that he might diſcharge this Office the more effectually, the *Apoſtle* warns him in the *firſt* Place to take care of himſelf, that he did not ſuffer *his own* Faith and Manners to be depraved and corrupted by thoſe *lewd* and *irreligious* Principles which thoſe *Antichriſtian*

Seminaries were then ſcattering among his People; that ſo he might be an Example to his Flock, as well as a Teacher of *pure* and *undefiled Religion.* And this, *ver.* 18. he preſſes upon him from the Conſideration of what had been foretold of him by *divine* Inſpiration, before ever he entered upon his Miniſtry, *viz.* That *he ſhould war a good Warfare*, that is, prove a *conſtant* and *couragious* Champion of the *Chriſtian* Faith; which Propheſies, he exhorts him to uſe his *utmoſt* Endeavour to verify both in his Profeſſion and Practice, *by holding*, or as it is in the Original, ἔχων, *having*, or *keeping Faith and a good Conſcience*, which *latter*, viz. a *good Conſtience*, *ſome having put away*, concerning the *former*, viz. *Faith*, *have made ſhipwreck.*

Before we proceed to the Deſign of theſe Words, it will be *neceſſary* briefly to explain ſome Terms in them; as,

1. What is meant by *Faith.*
2. What by a *good Conſcience.*
3. What by putting away a *good Conſcience:* And,
4. What by making *ſhipwreck of the Faith.*

1. As for the *Firſt*, What is here meant by *keeping the Faith?* I anſwer, By this Phraſe *Faith*, we are to underſtand the *Chriſtian Creed*, or Summary of thoſe *neceſſary* and *eſſential* Doctrines whereof the *Chriſtian Religion* is compoſed: For at that Time there was *little* elſe profeſſed and taught in the *Chriſtian* Churches, but only the *fundamental* Principles of

of *Chriſtianity*, together with the *neareſt* and moſt *immediate* Inferences from them; ſo that few then misbelieved but ſuch as misbelieved in *Fundamentals*, and every Error in Doctrine was generally a Hereſy. The *Chriſtian* Faith in thoſe Days lay within a *narrow* Compaſs, and ſo it continued till the Wantonneſs and Curioſity of *ſucceeding* Ages ſtarted *diſputable* Opinions, and as they prevailed, *adopted* them into the Family of Faith; inſomuch, that in Proceſs of Time, *ſundry* Opinions were received that were never ſo much as heard of in the *Apoſtolical Age*; and as ſoon as they were received, they were preſently declared neceſſary Articles. And as for the *contradictory* Opinions, though *Chriſtianity* was little or nothing concerned whether they were *true* or *falſe*, yet they ſeldom underwent any *milder* Name than *Hereſy*, or *gentler* Doom than Damnation; which hath been one of the *grand* Occaſions of all the Ruptures and Diviſions that have happened in the *Chriſtian* World. But as for the Faith which the *Apoſtle* here ſpeaks of, it was of a much *leſs* Bulk than what it is now arrived to, by rolling through the *wild* Opiniatry of *ſixteen diſputation Ages*, which by Degrees have ſwelled it from a *ſhort* Script into a *large* Volume. For if we look into the *New Teſtament*, and into the Writings of the moſt *Primitive Fathers*, we ſhall find the Sums of *Chriſtian* Faith therein contained, conſiſting of very *few* Articles, and thoſe ſuch only as are *eſſential* to *Chriſtian Religion*, and ſuch as wherein almoſt all the *differing* Perſuaſions of *Chriſtians* do to this Day concenter. To hold

the Faith therefore is to persevere immovably in the Profession of the *true Christian* Doctrine, so far as in us lies, and not to be prevailed upon to desert or forsake it, either through *Fear* of Persecution, or *Hope* of *temporal* Advantage, or the *knavish* Arts and sly Insinuations of *false* Teachers.

2. The *second* Term here to be explained, is, What is meant by keeping a *good Conscience?* Conscience in general is nothing but our *practical* Judgment directing us what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*, and *approving* or *reproving*, according as we follow its Directions, or run counter to them. The Conscience therefore is *good* or *bad*, according as the Directions are which it gives for the Government of our Lives and Actions. If our Judgment be *false* and *erroneous*, and directs us to *do* what we ought to *avoid*, or to *avoid* what we ought to *do*, it is a *bad* Conscience, that instead of being a Light to guide our Steps in the Paths of Righteousness, is only a *wandering Night-Fire* that leads us into Bogs and Quagmires. As on the contrary, a *good* Conscience is our *practical* Judgment well informed, and truly directing us in the Course of our Actions what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid:* For a *good* Conscience is the *true* Echo of *God* within us, that faithfully resounds his Voice, and upon all Opportunities of Action, repeats after him to our Wills and Affections. To keep a *good* Conscience therefore implies *two* Things: *First*, To maintain in our Minds a *true* Sense of *Good* and *Evil*, and so far forth as in us lies, to preserve our *practical* Judgment *pure* from all *false* Principles

Principles of Action, and not to ſuffer either our *vicious* Inclinations, or *worldly* Intereſt, to warp and ſeduce it, and cauſe it to miſtake *Evil* for *Good*, and *Good* for *Evil*. *Secondly*, It implies our following the Dictates and Directions of a *good* Conſcience, our doing what it *bids*, and abſtaining from what it *forbids*, and faithfully reſigning ourſelves to its Conduct and Government, and not to be prevailed upon by any Temptation whatſoever to act counter to its Senſe and Perſuaſion. In ſhort, To keep a *good Conſcience*, is to live in a *ſtrict* Conformity to the Dictates of a *well-informed* Judgment, and not to allow ourſelves in any Courſe of Action which this Vice-God within us forbids or diſapproves.

3. The *Third* Term to be explained in the Text, is, What is meant by *putting away a good Conſcience*; which being directly oppoſed here to keeping a *good Conſcience*, muſt denote the Contraries to it. To put away a *good Conſcience* therefore, is either, *firſt*, to corrupt *our own* Judgment of Things and Actions out of *vicious* Affection or *worldly* Intereſt, and impoſe upon ourſelves *falſe* Notions of *Good* and *Evil*; or, *ſecondly*, to act directly contrary to our Senſe and Perſuaſion; to leave *undone* thoſe things which *our own* Conſcience tells us we ought to *do*, and to *do* thoſe things which it tells us we ought not to *do*. In ſhort, to put away a *good Conſcience* is to live in any *known* Courſe of Sin, either of *Omiſſion* or *Commiſſion*; to practiſe Contradictions to *our own* Judgments, and to follow the Inclinations of our Wills againſt the Light and Conviction of our Conſciences.

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4. The *laſt* Enquiry is, What is here meant by making *ſhipwreck of the Faith?* Which being here ſet in Oppoſition to *holding* or *keeping the Faith*, muſt ſignify oppoſitely, and conſequently muſt denote not holding and keeping it; or which is the ſame thing, loſing and abandoning it: For in this *Allegory*, the *true Chriſtian* Faith is repreſented as a Ship, and a *good Conſcience*, or a *pure* and *holy* Life, as the Pilot that ſteers and governs it. And indeed, in that State of Things there was no *other* Pilot, but Purity of Conſcience and Holineſs of Life, was able to conduct and preſerve this Ship, and carry it *ſafe* through thoſe *inceſſant* Storms of Perſecution, wherein at that Time it was toſſed and agitated. For when *Chriſtians* have once thrown *off* the Obligations of a *good Conſcience*, by abandoning themſelves to a *wicked* and *diſſolute* Life, what is there left to reſtrain them from abandoning their Faith, when it ſtands in Competition with their worldly Eaſe and Intereſt? And though there ſhould be no Competition between their Faith and Intereſt, but they might freely enjoy them both without any Diſturbance; yet their *wicked* Lives will naturally tempt them to corrupt their Faith with *wicked* Principles; of which *latter* in the next Verſe, he gives an *eminent* Inſtance in *Hymenæus*, who had not wholly deſerted *Chriſtianity*, but only renounced *one fundamental* Article of it, *viz.* the Reſurrection of the Dead: As of the *former*, he gives *another* Inſtance in *Alexander*, who, as it ſeems probable, had through the Fear of Perſecution deſerted *Chriſtianity* itſelf.

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The Words thus explained may be reſolved into this Senſe, *That Mens living wickedly againſt the Convictions and Obligations of their Conſcience, doth very much expoſe them to Apoſtacy from true Religion into groſs and impious Errors.* Thus to *the Love of Money, which is the Root of all Evil, the Apoſtle* attributes Mens erring *from the Faith*, 1 Tim. vi. 10, And that which expoſed thoſe *ſilly Women*, 2 *Tim.* iii. 6. to the Seduction of *falſe* Teachers, was their being *laden with Sins*, and *led away with diverſe Luſts.* And the ſame *Apoſtle* aſcribes *Dema's* Apoſtacy to his Covetouſneſs, or *inordinate Love of this preſent World.* 2 Tim. iv. 10. But that I may evince this Truth more fully, I ſhall give you ſome *particular* Inſtances of the *mighty* Tendencies there are in every *vicious* Courſe of Life to Error and Apoſtacy from *true Religion.*

1. It *corrupts* and *debauches* Mens Reaſon and Underſtanding.

2. It renders the Principles of *true Religion uneaſy* to their Minds,

3. It deprives Men of the *higheſt* Encouragements to Conſtancy and Stedfaſtneſs in *Religion.*

4. It weakens the *natural* Force of their Conſciences, which is the *greateſt* Reſtraint from *Apoſtacy.*

5. It ſtrengthens the Temptations to Apoſtacy.

6. It provokes *God* to give us *up* to the Power of Deluſions.

1. Liv-

1. Living in any *known* and *wilful* Courſe of Sin, corrupts and debauches Men's Reaſon and Underſtanding. So long as a Man lives in any *known* Sin, he doth not only live without, but againſt his Reaſon, which, inſtead of being the Guide of his Actions, hath nothing at all to do with them, but like an *idle* Spectator, doth only behold the *brutiſh* Scene without any Part or Concern in it. And whilſt a Man thus abandons himſelf to the Government of his own *blind* Will, and lives not only in the *perpetual* Neglect, but Contempt of his Reaſon, it is impoſſible for him not to waſte and impair it: For as our *rational* Faculties are improved and perfected by Exerciſe, ſo they naturally languiſh and decay through Diſuſe and Inactivity; and conſequently, the *leſs* Uſe we make of them in the Government of our Lives and Actions, which is their *proper* Office and Employment, like *ſtanding* Waters, they muſt corrupt and putrify. And indeed there is no *impure* Luſt but doth, by its own *natural* Efficacy, diſable Mens Reaſon and Underſtanding; for while we are in theſe Bodies, our Mind is fain to work by *bodily* Inſtruments, and to make Uſe of *Brains*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits*, in all its Operations; and according as their Temper is *good* or *bad*, its Operations will be *more* or *leſs perfect*: But while a Man indulges himſelf in any *impure* Affection, that will naturally diſtemper theſe Organs of his Mind, and indiſpoſe them for the Uſe of his Reaſon. For ſo Madneſs, which is ſuch a Diſtemperature of the *Brain*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits*, as doth wholly

wholly alienate them from the Uſe of Reaſon and Diſcourſe, is uſually found to be the Effect of ſome *wild* and *extravagant* Affection, ſuch as *Pride*, or *Covetouſneſs*, *Anger*, or *Fearfulneſs*, *Jealouſy*, or *Luſt*; and if theſe Paſſions, being once arrived to their *utmoſt* Rage and Exceſs, do ſo often run into *down-right* Madneſs and Diſtraction, to be ſure every *inordinate* Degree of them muſt be a Tendency towards it, a *great* Diſturbance of Mind, though not a *total* Diſtraction; and how much they exceed their *due* Bounds and Meaſures, by ſo much they muſt taint and vitiate theſe *neceſſary* Inſtruments of our Mind and Reaſon. Thus every *inordinate* Luſt doth by a *natural* Influence diſturb Mens Reaſon, and ſully the Clearneſs of their *diſcerning* Faculties. So that what *Clearneſs* is to the Eye of the Body, that *Purity* from *vicious* Affection is to the Eye of the Mind; it brightens its Apprehenſions, and renders its Conceptions of Things more *quick*, *diſtinct*, and *vigorous*: Whereas on the contrary, all *diſorderly* Affection doth *more* or *leſs* cloud and diſturb the Brain, chill or inflame the Spirits, hurry them into *tumultuous* Motions, or render them *liſtleſs* and *unactive*; by which *continual* Diſorders, our *diſcerning* Faculties muſt by Degrees be extremely weakened and confounded. And whilſt the Mind is thus *loſt* in the Fogs of *inordinate* Affection, it is an *eaſy* Matter to ſeduce and miſlead it, it being through the Dimneſs of its Sight apt to be impoſed upon by *falſe* Colours, and tinctured with Prejudice and *undue* Apprehenſions of Things. *Weak* Minds are eaſily abuſed, eſpecially

cially in Matters of *Religion*, which being placed beyond the Proſpect of Senſe, require a *ſeverer* Attention in order to the forming of *right* Apprehenſions concerning them; and therefore the *more* Men weaken their Underſtandings by their Luſts, the *more* they muſt be expoſed to Errors and Deluſions. But then,

2. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin, renders the Principles of *true Religion* uneaſy to Mens Minds. Whilſt a Man leads a *wicked* Life, his *religious* Principles, if they are *pure* and *true*, will perpetually reproach and upbraid him: For there are no Contraries in Nature more *irreconcilable* to *one another* than *true* Faith and *bad* Manners; the *great* Deſign of all *true* Faith being to move and perſuade Men to abſtain from all Ungodlineſs, and *to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*. If therefore a Man's Faith be *true* and *genuine*, he cannot live wickedly without acting againſt the *full* Perſuaſion of his *own* Mind, which muſt neceſſarily render him very *uneaſy*; for in this State of Things he acts with a *ſelf-condemning* Judgment, and every Compliance with his Inclination ſets him at odds with his Reaſon; all the while he is meditating any *wicked* Deſign, he ſtruggles with his Conſcience, and confronts and outrages his *own* Convictions; and when he hath acted it, every Reflection he makes on it is a *bitter* Invective againſt himſelf: Thus ſo long as the Principles of *true Religion* poſſeſs his Mind, he finds himſelf continually hagged and oppreſſed by them; they ſit as an *uneaſy* Load upon

upon his Soul, and will not ſuffer him to ſin in quiet, but perpetually cauſe his *ſinful* Delights to go *off* with an *ungrateful* Farewel, and recoil upon him in many a *ſickly* Qualm and Convulſion. In which State of Things he hath no *other* Remedy, but either to forſake his Principles, or his Luſts, or to live in *perpetual* Variance with himſelf; and therefore, if he ſtill reſolve to ſin on, in all Probability he will ſoon grow quite weary of *true Religion*, and quit his Mind as ſoon as poſſibly he can, of thoſe *ſtern* and *inflexible* Principles which create theſe Diſcords in his Breaſt. And whilſt he is in this Temper, it will be an *eaſy* Matter to prevert him to any *Religion* that will give Eaſe to his *ſtrait-laced* Conſcience, and caſt a more *favourable* Aſpect on his Luſt; for being reſolved to follow his *vicious* Inclinations, he now ſees through them, and underſtands by them; and whilſt his Mind runs upon the *falſe* Biaſs of his Luſts, that *Religion* which is moſt *grateful* to them will ſeem moſt *reaſonable* to him. Shew him a Way how he may worſhip *God* acceptably without the Expence of a *ſtrict* Attention, and the *inward* Devotions of a *pure* Heart, and *heavenly* Affections; merely by numbering ſo many Prayers on a String of Beads, by ſeeing a Prieſt act over ſuch a Set of Ceremonies, and hearing him in *varied* Tones ſometimes pronounce. and ſometimes murmur a *Form of Words* in an *unknown Language*; and though at firſt view it may ſeem very *abſurd* to him, yet the very Looſeneſs and Carnality will be apt to engage his Affections to it; and then they by Degrees will

go

go near to wheedle his Understanding into a more *favourable* Opinion of it. Propose to him an Expedient how he may go to *Heaven* at last, without undergoing the Severities of a *sincere* Repentance and Amendment; tell him there is a *certain Church* in the World, whose Priests, if he confess his Sins to them with any Degree of Sorrow and Remorse, have *full* Power to pardon and absolve him; so that if he do but take care not to die without Confession, however he lives, he cannot miscarry for ever. He may indeed go into a very *hot* Place called *Purgatory*, and there suffer awhile very *grievous* Things before he get to *Heaven*; but if instead of parting with his Lusts while he lives, he will part with his Money when he dies, he may at *easy* Rates purchase of that *Church* such a Number of *Masses*, *Requiems*, and *Indulgencies*, as will in all Probability soon procure his Dismission from those *temporary* Sufferings into *eternal* Happiness. How *oddly* soever this Doctrine may appear to his Reason, to be sure it will be *charming* enough to his Lusts; and when once a Man's Lusts are retained, the Cause is half carried at the Bar of his Judgment. And so in all *other* Instances it is a *great* Disadvantage to *true Religion*, and as *great* an Advantage to *false*, that Mens Faith and Reason are so much swayed and biassed by their Lusts. For though there is no *Religion* can be *true* but what is *pure* and *holy*, yet it is the Holiness of *true Religion* that doth provoke their Lusts against it, and 'tis their Lusts that do provoke their Reason; and when all is done, there is nothing doth more

more ſtrongly incline, or frequently pervert *depraved* and *wicked* Minds to *falſe Religion*, than its Compliance with their *vicious* Affections, though this very Thing is one of the moſt *certain* Signs in Nature of its Falſhood.

3. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin, deprives Men of the *greateſt* Encouragements to Conſtancy and Stedfaſtneſs in the *true Religion*: For doubtleſs the *higheſt* Encouragement to Perſeverance in the Truth againſt all Oppoſitions and Temptations, is the Hope of thoſe *glorious* Rewards that await them in the World to come. 'Twas this that guarded the Faith of the *antient* Martyrs ſafe through all the Rage and Cruelty of their Perſecutors; their having an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, the Sight of which *inſpired* the *drooping* Souls with an *invincible* Courage, made them deſpiſe *Racks*, and *Wheels*, and *Flames*, and exult and triumph under the moſt *exquiſite* Torments. And indeed what *leſs* Encouragement than the Hope of being eternally *happy* within a *few* Moments, could have enabled a Company of *tender* Virgins, *delicate* Matrons, *infirm* and *aged* Biſhops, to endure thoſe *long* and *dolorous* Martyrdoms, as many Times they did, when their Tormentors took their Turns from Morn to Night, and plied them with all Kinds of Tortures, till oftentimes they were forced to give over, and confeſs themſelves overcome either through Wearineſs or Compaſſion? But now, by indulging ourſelves in any *known* Courſe of Sin, we throw away this *Sovereign* Cordial, and leave ourſelves naked and deſtitute of all the mighty Supports it is able to give us under

under any Temptation to Apoſtacy. For how can we hope for any Good from *God*, and much *leſs* for ſo *great* a Good as a *Heaven* of *immortal* Joys amounts to, whilſt we perſiſt in *open* Rebellion againſt him; eſpecially when he hath expreſly ſuſpended this *mighty* Recompence upon our *conſtant* and *faithful* Obedience to his Will, and told us plainly before-hand, that we might know what to truſt to, that if we fail of *this*, he will be ſo far from admitting us into that Place and State of Bleſſedneſs, that he will baniſh us *for ever* from his Preſence into *outer* Darkneſs, and *eternal* Wretchedneſs and Deſpair? When by *wilful* Sin therefore we have caſt away our Hope of Heaven, what have we left to ſupport our Conſtancy to the Truth if ever we ſhould be called to ſuffer for it? How can it be expected, that rather than renounce our *Religion*, we ſhould be contented to part with our *Goods*, or *Liberties*, or *Lives*, when all our Hope is ſhut up in this Life, and we have no Proſpect of Compenſation either *here* or *hereafter*? If ever therefore we would be *ſtedfaſt* to the Truth againſt all Temptations, we muſt above all Things take care by a *holy* Life to cheriſh and keep alive the Hopes of *Heaven* in our Breaſts, which is the only Anchor that can hold and ſecure us in a *ſtormy* Sea from making Shipwreck of our Faith.

4. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin weakens the *natural* Force of Mens Conſciences, which is the *greateſt* Reſtraint from Apoſtacy. Indeed for Men to *apoſtatize* from their *Religion* to ſecure their *worldly* Intereſt, is a Thing

Thing ſo *baſe* and *infamous*, ſo *foul* an Inſtance of a *cowardly*, *degenerous*, and *proſtitute* Soul, that if a Man were under no *other* Reſtraint but only that Senſe of Honour that is lodged in all *brave* Minds, he would ſcorn ſo *mean*, ſo *poor* a Condeſcention. But yet when all is done, there is no ſuch *powerful* Reſtraint upon Men as that of a *good* Conſcience, which is the *natural* Bridle by which *God* curbs our *head-ſtrong* Nature, and keeps it from flying out into all the *wild* Extravagancies it is inclined to. For it is from *God*, and in *God*'s ſtead, that Conſcience acts, who is the moſt *powerful* Being in the World: When it *commands*, it is with *God*'s Authority; when it *rebukes*, it is with *God*'s Majeſty; when it *applauds*, it is with *God*'s Complacency: It proceeds not upon Principles of *mere* Policy or Prudence, which require us to act this way *now*, and *anon* the contrary, as Circumſtances alter; but upon the *awful* Principles of Divinity, which oblige us by all that we can hope or fear *for ever*, and require of us the ſelf-ſame Things and Actions in all Circumſtances; and the *ſole* Reaſon it inſiſts on is the Will of *God*, whoſe Pleaſure or Diſpleaſure can make us *happy* or *miſerable* for ever. The Voice of Conſcience is not, *This I judge moſt expedient for thee to do, and this to avoid, but this thou muſt do, and this avoid, as thou tendereſt the Love of God, and dreadeſt his everlaſting Hatred and Revenge:* And it is no leſs than *eternal* Bliſs that Conſcience allures our Hope with, and *eternal* Vengeance that it alarms our

Fear with; and if Men will not be with-held by ſuch *powerful* Reſtraints as theſe, what can with-hold them? Whilſt therefore a Man cheriſhes his Conſcience by complying with it, and follows its Directions, this, if any thing, will ſecure his Stedfaſtneſs to the Truth againſt all Temptations; whilſt this hath any Power over him, he will as ſoon eat Fire as *ſacrifice* his Faith to his Intereſt. For, for a Man to renounce his *Religion* upon any Proſpect of *temporal* Gain or Loſs, is ſuch a *flagitious* Violation of all that is *Sacred*, ſuch a *monſtrous* Inſtance of *High Treaſon* againſt *God*, ſuch an *open* Blaſphemy of his Truth, ſuch a *bold* Defiance of his Majeſty, and in a Word, ſuch a Complication of *vile* Perfidy, *baſe* Ingratitude, and *impious* Falſhood, that but to think of it is like looking down from a *ſtupendous* Precipice, that ſwims the Head, and ſtrikes the Mind with Horror and Amazement; ſo that while a Man's Conſcience hath any Power over him, he will no more be able to prevail with himſelf to commit the *one*, than to throw himſelf headlong down from the *other*, whilſt he is under the Horror of the Proſpect; and he will find it ſo much more *eaſy* to endure the worſt of Perſecutions, than to commit ſuch an Outrage and Violence on his Conſcience, and undergo thoſe *horrible* Reflections, and *ſtinging* Remorſes, that muſt follow it: But after a Man, by wilful *ſinning*, hath often wounded his Conſcience, the *natural* Tenderneſs of it will by Degrees wear off, till at length it grows quite *callous* and *inſenſible*. For what is reported

perted of *Mithridates*, that by often drinking of Poiſon, he had ſo *familiarized* it to his Conſtitution, that at length it ſate quietly on his Stomach, and gave him no Diſturbance, is true of Conſcience, which at firſt recoils at every *ſinful* Potion, and cannot ſwallow it without ſuffering *violent* Spaſms and Convulſions; but having been a while accuſtomed to it, it by Degrees grows more and more *natural*, till at length it goes more glibly *down* without ſtraining, and goes quietly *off* without Remorſe or Reluctance. And when once a Man's Conſcience is frozen over by a Cuſtom of Sinning, it will every Day grow *harder* and *harder*, and at length be able to bear the *heavieſt* Loads of Guilt without relenting; and when once Things are reduced to this State, *Good* and *Evil*, *Virtue* and *Vice*, are Things *indifferent* to him, which he chuſes or refuſes as they come to hand, and are *more* or *leſs ſubſervient* to his *preſent* Convenience. He can *blaſpheme* and *pray*, *oppreſs* and *give Alms*, with the ſame Unconcernedneſs of Mind; and to act the *Devil* or the *Saint* are Parts ſo *indifferent* to him, that he can perform them both with the ſame Remorſleſneſs. And when a Man is thus got looſe from the Reſtraints of his Conſcience, there is nothing ſo *bad* that can come amiſs to him. If therefore while he ſtands in this Poſture, his *temporal* Intereſt ſhould chance to beckon him to change the *beſt Religion* in the World for the *worſt*; to pray to *inſenſible* Images, and *dead* Mens Ghoſt, inſtead of the *everlaſting God*; to let go Subſtances to catch

at Shadows and Ceremonies, and to part with the moſt *rational* Truths for the moſt *palpable* and *fulſom* Cantradictions; he hath no Principle in him *ſtrong* enough to with-hold him from a *baſe* Compliance, his Conſcience being laid faſt aſleep, which whilſt awake would have trembled at ſuch an *horrid* Propoſal. And though by thus proſtituting his Faith to his Intereſt, he at once renounces his *God*, his *Saviour*, and all his Hopes of *future* Immortality; yet his *inſenſible* and *remorſleſs* Heart is no more touched or affected with it, than if it were the *ſlighteſt* Peccadillo. Thus by letting go a *good Conſcience*, Men pave themſelves an *eaſy* Way to Apoſtacy from *true Religion*, which otherwiſe would be one of the moſt *craggy* and *difficult* Paſſages in all the Highway to *Hell*.

5. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin doth very much ſtrengthen and enforce the Temptations to Apoſtacy. He who lives under the Conduct and Government of a *good Conſcience*, takes care to regulate his Affections towards the Things of this World, ſo as neither to fear the *Evils* of it *too* much, nor love the *Goods* of it *too* well; but makes a *juſt* and *equal* Eſtimate of both, and by that proportions his Affections towards them; and he who doth this, diſarms them of their *tempting* Power, which is chiefly owing to ourſelves, and the *falſe* Eſtimate we make of them. 'Tis *our own* Imagination that gives Life and Efficacy to the Charms and Terrors of the World, and renders them ſo *ſucceſsful* and *victorious*: We fancy

fancy *that* to be in them which is not, and ſo are affected not ſo much with the Things themſelves, as with the *falſe* Repreſentations that we make of them. But he, who by following the Dictates of a *good Conſcience*, hath reduced his *wild* Affections within the Liſts of Reaſon and Sobriety, can from thence defy the World, and maintain his Poſt againſt all its Temptations. He loves its *Goods* no better than they deſerve, and conſequently he loves them not ſo well as to part with his Virtue, his Innocence, and his Soul for them. He dreads its *Evils* no farther than they are truly *dreadful*, and conſequently is fully ſatisfied, that to ſin is much more *dreadful* than to ſuffer; and he hath found, by often Experience, that in the *faithful* Diſcharge of his Duty, there is far more *Peace*, more *Joy*, and *Satisfaction*, than in all the *vain* Allurements of this World. He hath found another *Heaven* upon Earth, beſides theſe *temporal* Enjoyments; a *Heaven* within *his own* Breaſt, compoſed of *joyous* Hopes, and *bleſſed* Expectations; and in this *Heaven* hath often found himſelf a thouſand times more *happy*, than among all the Feſtivities of an *earthly* Paradiſe; and therefore knows very well that he is bid to his Loſs, whenever he is tempted to exchange the *one* for the *other*. He is thoroughly ſenſible, having already found it to his Smart, that by ſinning he ſhall ſuſtain a much *heavier* Loſs, and expoſe himſelf to far more *exquiſite* Agonies of Mind than any this World can threaten him withal; and therefore certainly reckons upon it, that

whenever to avoid a Sin he incurs a Suffering, he wiſely chuſes of *two* Evils the *leaſt*. And while his Soul ſtands thus affected, it is *ſhot-proof* againſt all Temptations, and much more againſt thoſe Temptations, which ſollicit him to renounce his *Religion*, and in which he knows by Experience, there is far more *Good* than the World can propoſe to him in exchange for it. He knows both how *little* the World, and how much *true Religion* is worth; and having made a *juſt* Eſtimate of both, to propoſe to him any *worldly* Hope as a Price for his Faith, is the ſame thing as to offer a Miſer Droſs for his Gold. His Mind is fixed in this Perſuaſion, that all the Miſchiefs *this* World can do him, are *inconſiderable* to one who muſt live *for ever* in *another* unſpeakably *happy* or *miſerable*; and therefore to threaten him into an Apoſtacy with any *worldly* Fear, is to attempt to blow *up* a Rock of Marble with a Squib of Wildfire. But when once a Man hath taken *off* the Reſtraints of his Conſcience from his *wild* Affections, and let them looſe to the World, they will aid and aſſiſt its Temptations againſt him, and animate them with a thouſand times more Life and Vigour than is in their *own* Natures. For as for the *Goods* of this World, they can never bewitch us as they do, did we not give a Dreſs to them; we paint their Faces, and varniſh them over with an *artificial* Beauty, and then fall in Love with *our own* Fucus; and ſo much as we value and affect them beyond their *natural* Worth, ſo much Power we give them

to

to conquer and enſlave us. When therefore, by leading a *ſenſual* and *wicked* Life, a Man has wholly devoted himſelf to the World, he hath put himſelf into the World's Power to be commanded and diſpoſed of as it pleaſes. And now if any *worldly Good* beckons and invites him, his *mad* Affection will preſently hurry him after it, though it be through *thick* and *thin*, through the moſt *flagitious* and *enormous* Courſes. If any *worldly Evil* threaten and alarm him, he muſt immediately fly, though it be from *Virtue* and *Innocence*, from *God* and *Heaven*, and all that is *Sacred* in *Religion*. His Affections have rendered him a *mere* Laquey to the *Goods* and *Evils* that are *without* him, and whither ever they ſend him, he muſt go, wherever they lead him, he muſt follow, let their Vagaries be never ſo *wild* and *wicked*. If therefore, while his Soul is thus enſlaved to the World, he ſhould be tempted by him to *apoſtatize* from his *Religion*, what hath he to reſtrain or ſecure him? For ever ſince he got looſe from his Conſcience, he is wholly led by his Affections, and theſe being chained and faſtened to the World, hale him after it which way ſoever it moves. So long as his *Religion* and his *worldly* Intereſt conſiſt, and go Hand in Hand, he is very well content to own and follow it; but if ever a Storm of Perſecution ſhould part them, in all Probability he will follow his Intereſt, and like the *treacherous Orpha*, give his *Religion* a *parting* Kiſs, and leave it. For his Heart is now ſo wedded to the World, that he eſteems

nothing ſo *good* as its *Goods*, and nothing ſo *evil* as its *Evils*; and the *one* being his *Heaven*, and the other his *Hell*, all other Conſiderations are overcome by them; and to obtain the *one*, and avoid the *other*, he muſt ſtick at nothing, no not at renouncing his *God* and his *Religion*, together with all his *Hopes* of a *future* Immortality.

6. and *laſtly*, Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin, provokes *God* to give us up to the Power of Deluſion: For ſo long as Men ſubmit themſelves to the Guidance and Direction of a *good Conſcience*, the Spirit of *God*, who is a Spirit of Truth, abides with them, and not only directs their Wills, but alſo informs their Underſtandings, and enables them to diſcern the Beauty and Reality of thoſe *heavenly* Truths, which he hath revealed to us in the *Holy Scriptures*. For though ſince he hath revealed already the whole Will of *God* to us concerning our *eternal* Salvation, we have no Reaſon to expect that he will reveal *new* Truths to us; yet ſeeing ſo far forth as it is *neceſſary*, he hath promiſed and engaged, that he will co-operate with us to enable us as well to underſtand the Will of *God* as to perform it; we have the greateſt Reaſon in the World to depend upon it, that ſo long as we cheriſh his *heavenly* Inſpirations, by yielding to them our *free* and *ready* Compliance, he will be ſo far an *aſſiſting Genius* to our Underſtandings, as to ſuggeſt to us thoſe Truths which he hath already revealed, and ſet them before our Eyes in ſo *fair* a Light, as that we ſhall not fail

fail more clearly to diſcern, and more diſtinctly to apprehend them than otherwiſe we ſhould or could have done. For when he writes his Truths upon our Minds, it is with ſuch a *victorious* Sun-beam as will endure neither Cloud nor Shadow before it. Whenever he ſpeaks, he ſpeaks not to our Ears but to our Minds, and repreſents Things nakedly and immediately to our Underſtandings. He converſes with our Spirits, as *Spirits* do with *Spirits*, without involving his Senſe in *articulate* Sounds or *material* Repreſentations; but objects it to us in its own *naked* Light, and *characterizes* it immediately on our Underſtandings. And as he propoſes the *divine* Light to us, ſo he alſo illuminates our Minds to diſcern and comprehend it: He raiſes and exalts our *intellectual* Powers, and as a *vital* Form to the Light of our Reaſon, invigorates and actuates it, and thereby renders its Apprehenſion of Things more *quick*, and *piercing*, and *ſagacious*. Thus doth the *Holy Spirit more* or *leſs* aſſiſt us in the *true* Underſtanding of *divine* Things, as he finds us *more* or *leſs compliant* with his *heavenly* Pleaſure; and though he ſtands no more obliged to render our Minds *infallible* than our Wills *impeccable*, yet ſo long as by our *ſincere* Obedience to his *holy* Suggeſtions, we keep ourſelves under his Conduct and Direction, we may depend upon it, he will either preſerve us from all *dangerous* Errors, or if for *juſt* Reaſons he ſhould permit us to fall into any ſuch, they ſhall not prove *dangerous* to us, but either we ſhall be convinced of them while we live, or obtain Pity

and

and Pardon for them when we die. But whilſt we perſiſt in any *wilful* Courſe of Sin, we do not only violate *our own* Conſcience, but alſo repel thoſe *good* Motions of the *Spirit of God*, whereby he ſtrives to reduce and reclaim us; in doing which we continually grieve him, and if we do not forbear, ſhall at length provoke him wholly to forſake and abandon us, to give us up to *our own* Hearts Luſts as *deſperate* Wretches, with whom he hath hitherto ſtrove and ſtruggled in vain, and of whoſe *future* Recovery there remains no *farther* Hope or Proſpect. And when he hath forſaken us, our Mind will not only be left *naked* and *deſtitute* of all thoſe Helps and Advantages for the Underſtanding of *divine* Truths, which it receives from him, but alſo be expoſed to the Cheats and Fallacies of *Evil Spirits*, whoſe Recreation it is to put Tricks upon our Minds; to banter and play upon our *eaſy* Faith, to caſt Miſts before our Eyes, and therein to juggle away all *true Religion* from us, and foiſt in the room of it, the moſt *fulſom* Errors and Miſtakes. For ſo the *Apoſtle* tells us of *Antichriſt* the *great* Deceiver, that he ſhould *come with all the Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs to them that periſh, becauſe they received not the Love of Truth, that they might be ſaved.* And that for that Cauſe, *viz.* their not receiving the *Truth in the Love of it, God ſhould ſend them a ſtrong Deluſion that they ſhould believe a Lye*; that is, by abandoning them to the Power of cheating and deluding Spirits: *That they all might be damned, who believed*

believed not the Truth, but had Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs, 2 Theſſ. ii. 10, 11, 12. And *God* grant that this at laſt prove not our Fate, that becauſe we have ſinned againſt the *cleareſt* Light, and gone aſtray in all Unrighteouſneſs under the *beſt* and *pureſt Religion* in the World, we are not at length given up by *God* to follow the *wild* Deluſions of *Antichriſt*, and to believe all thoſe *fulſom* Lyes and Impoſtures which he from Age to Age hath been impoſing upon the World. But whether it proves thus or no, this I am ſure of, that by perſiſting in any *vicious* Courſe againſt the Light and Conviction of our Conſcience, we highly provoke *Almighty God* to withdraw his Grace from us, and give us *up* to *our own* Hearts Luſts; and when this is done, *our own* Hearts Luſts will ſoon betray and give *up* our Faith to *falſe* and *vicious* Principles of *Religion*.

And now having ſhewn at large what *ſtrong* and *prevalent* Tendencies there are in a *wicked* Life to Apoſtacy from *true Religion*, I ſhall conclude this Argument with *two* or *three* Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, What a *great* Malignity there is in Mens being *inconſtant* to, and *apoſtatizing* from the *true Religion* in Compliance with their *ſinful* Affections; it being, as you ſee, the ill Daughter of a *bad* Mother, (a *debauched* and a *diſſolute* Conſcience) and conſequently partaking of all its *natural* Bane and Malignity, even as all other *bad* Effects do of the *malignant* Nature of their *bad* Cauſes. But the Truth of this will more fully

fully appear by conſidering the *particular* Evils which Mens Inconſtancy to, and Proneneſs to revolt from, the *true Religion* imply; of which I ſhall give you theſe five Inſtances:

1. The *great* Impiety of it.
2. The *deſperate* Folly of it.
3. The *foul* Diſhoneſty of it.
4. The *ſhameful* Cowardice of it.
5. The *vaſt* Hazard and Inſecurity of it.

1. Conſider the *great* Impiety of it. He who can part with his *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Terms than a *full* Conviction of the Falſhood of it, is either a *downright Atheiſt*, who believing no *Religion* to be *true*, governs himſelf by this Principle, That the *wiſeſt* Courſe is to profeſs none but that which is uppermoſt, and moſt for his Intereſt: or a *profane* and *impious* Wretch, who, though he believes his *own Religion true*, exchanges it for *another* which he believes to be *falſe*, upon no *other* Conſideration, but ſo much *temporal* Advantage to boot: By which he plainly declares, that in the Balance of his Eſtimation, the Odds between *Truth* and *Falſhood*, the Declarations of *God*, and the Impoſtures of the *Devil*, are ſo *inconſiderable*, that the *leaſt* Addition of the *tranſitory* Goods of this World to the *latter*, renders it of *ſufficient* Weight to turn the Scale againſt the *former*, and that for his Part he is not much concerned whether the *Almighty* be his Friend or Foe; and provided he may but enjoy his Eaſe and Pleaſure

ſure a *few* Years longer here, he is very well contented to part with all his Hopes and Intereſt in *God for ever*. For this is the *natural* Conſtruction of Mens Apoſtacy from the *true Religion* in Conſideration of their *worldly* Intereſt, that *that* Intereſt is in their Eſteem far more *eligible* than *God* with all his Power and Goodneſs, that it is *better* to be without *God* in the World than without Preferment, and that *that* Man makes a very *good* Bargain, who gets a *good* Place in Exchange for his *Maker*, and with the *treacherous Judas* ſells his *Saviour*, though it be for *thirty Pieces of Silver:* Which is ſuch a *monſtrous* Degree of Impiety, as one would think, ſhould be *ſufficient* to ſcare and affright the moſt *couragious* Sinner, that hath but the *leaſt* Apprehenſion of *God*, or Senſe of *Good* and *Evil*. But then,

2. Conſider the *deſperate* Folly of Mens abandoning their *Religion* in Compliance with their *vicious* Affections. For he, who without *thorough* Conviction abandons the Profeſſion of his *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *falſe*, doth together with that moſt certainly abandon all the *bleſſed* Rewards, and incur all the *dreadful* Penalties *that true Religion* promiſes and denounces, becauſe though his *Religion* perhaps may be *falſe*, yet in renouncing it whilſt he believes it *true*, his Will doth as maliciouſly renounce the *true Religion*, as if it really were ſo. He thought it *true*, and yet renounced it, by which he plainly declares, that if it had been *true* he would have renounced

it;

it; so that whether it be *true* or *false*, it is all one to him, his Will is the *same*, his Crime and Guilt the *same*; it is *true Religion* he intentionally renounces, and therefore in so doing, he doth intentionally renounce all his Concern and Interest in *true Religion*. Now what a *desperate* Piece of Folly is this for a Man to part with all his Stock in the *Common Bank* of *Religion*, which if it be not a *downright* Sham and Imposture, is of *everlasting* Moment and Concern to him, only for a *present* Gratification of some *vain* and *unreasonable* Lust; to divorce himself *for ever* from the Love of *God*, to quit all Title and Interest in the *precious* Blood of the *Saviour* of the World, only to curry a *short-lived* Favour with Men, with Men whose Breath is in their Nostrils, and who with a *few* Days or Years must go *off* the Stage, and leave us here perhaps *forlorn* and *destitute?* To part with all my *glorious* Hopes of *Heaven*, which are my *best* Heaven upon Earth; and which is *worse*, with *Heaven* itself, where I have Treasures of Bliss sufficient to maintain me in the most *happy* Port to *eternal* Ages; only to gain or secure a *transitory* Estate or Preferment, which, while I have, it cannot make me *happy*, and from which ere long I shall be torn and divided, and not be a Farthing the *better* for *for ever*; to expose oneself as a *publick* Spectacle of Scorn and Contempt to God and Angels, and all the *wise* and *good* Part of the *rational* World, for a *short extemporary* Blaze of *pompous* Splendor and Greatness, which lies at the Mercy of every

every Counter-blaſt of Fortune, and in all Probability will, ere long, expire in *Smoak* and *Stink*, *Wretchedneſs* and *Infamy*; to plunge oneſelf headlong into all the Agonies and Torments, the Horrors and Deſparations of a *woeful Eternity*, only to eſcape a *ſhort* Perſecution, and a *glorious* Martyrdom; when a little after perhaps I ſhall ſuffer a *great* deal *more*, and *longer*, under the *Gout*, or *Stone*, or *Strangury*, without the Comfort of dying in a *brave* Cauſe, and being aſſured of an *immortal* Recompence, than I could have done under the Hand of the Executioner with it? And yet all theſe *mad* Pranks that Man plays at once, who abandons his *Religion* in Compliance with his Luſts.

3. Conſider the *foul* Diſhoneſty of it: For, beſides that our *Religion* being the moſt *ſacred* Pledge committed to us by *God* for *our own* Uſe, and the Uſe of our *lateſt* Poſterity, we cannot viciouſly deſert and abandon it without betraying of *God*, and falſifying our Truſt to him; and which is *worſe*, without ſquandering away the moſt *ineſtimable* Good that ever he committed to Men, upon our own *baſe* Luſts, and his moſt *execrable* Enemies, which is diſhoneſtly blackened with the *fouleſt* Ingratitude: Beſides this, I ſay, by forſaking our *Religion* in Compliance with any *lewd* Affection, we not only do a *diſhoneſt* Thing at *preſent*, but alſo totally diſcard the Obligations to Honeſty for the *future*: For there is nothing can rationally oblige a Man to be thoroughly *honeſt* but only his *Religion*, or *inward*

inward Senſe that it is his *indiſpenſible* Duty towards *God*, before whoſe *righteous* Tribunal he muſt one Day give an Account of all his Actions. The *two great* Motives of *human* Action are *Religion*, and *worldly* Intereſt: Now as for *Religion*, that conſiſts of *fixed* and *unalterable* Principles, which will by no Means ply or bend to the Alterations of *outward* Affairs and Circumſtances; but do in all Conditions move and oblige us with *equal* Force and Vigour; whereas *worldly* Intereſt is a *fickle* and *mutable* Thing, that varies and alters with every *outward* Turn and Revolution: So that *that* which is my Intereſt *to-day*, may prove my Damage *to-morrow*; and if it ſhould, whatever Part I act *to-day*, it will oblige me to act the contrary *to-morrow*. When therefore a Man hath let go his *Religion*, and hath nothing but his Intereſt to hold him, it is *Croſs or Pile* for the *future*, whether you find him an *honeſt* Man or a *Knave*; becauſe from henceforth he will be *Knave* or *Honeſt*, according as it ſerves his Turn, and that which ſerves his Turn *to-day*, may prove his Loſs and Prejudice *to-morrow*; ſo that whether *to-day* or *to-morrow* he proves a *true* Man or a Cheat, wholly depends upon the *Die* of Fortune, and you muſt conſult his Stars to find the *lucky* Hour or Moment when you may ſafely truſt him. For after the Wretch hath been ſo *perfidious* as to renounce his *God* and his *Religion*, he hath no *one* Principle remaining in him upon which you can faſten any *laſting* Confidence. As for his Intereſt,

Intereſt that is ſuch a *fickle* and *inconſtant* Thing that there is no truſting it; if it plead for you *now*, the *next* Turn of Affairs it may be retained againſt you, and the Man being got looſe from all the Ties and Obligations of Fidelity, you may be ſure he will ſtick at nothing, be it ever ſo *foul*, that his *preſent* Intereſt invites him *to* to ſerve himſelf; he will make no Bones, whenever he hath a *fair* Opportunity, to *cheat* and *betray* his own Father, or ſupplant his *deareſt* Friend or Benefactor; and what ſhould hinder him, his Conſcience and Religion being gone, and with them all *binding* Principles of Truth and Honeſty? For when a Man forſakes his *Religion* out of any *vicious* Affection, he doth in Effect make this publick Declaration to the World, *By this my own Act and Deed, I do here for ever renounce all the Obligations to Honeſty and fair Dealing with God or Men, and am reſolved for the future to be deaf and inexorable to all the Importunities of Conſcience and Religion. From henceforth I will liſten to no other Call but that of my worldly Intereſt; when that bids me be honeſt, I will be honeſt; and when it bids me play the Knave, I will play the Knave; and therefore for the future, I warn all that know me to truſt me no farther than they can make it my Intereſt to be true, and not to venture the moſt trifling Matter in which they are unwilling to be wronged, either upon my Faith, or Word, or Oath, without demanding of me ſuch ample*

Securities as may render it impossible for me to wrong them without wronging myself. For this is the Principle I now intend to live by, That is always best and fittest to be done, that is most subservient to my present Interest. This in Construction of Fact is the Profession which that Man takes *up*, who in Compliance with any *vicious* Affection abandons the Profession of his *Religion*.

4. Consider the *shameful* Cowardice of it. The Advantages of *true Religion* are *great* enough to encourage a Mind of any Constancy or Firmness, to charge through the *greatest* Difficulties the World can interpose between *them* and *him*. Who that hath the Spirit of a Man, would ever boggle to wade through a *narrow shallow* Stream of *temporary* Sufferings, whilst on the *farther* Shore he beholds a *Heaven* of *immortal* Joys ready to receive and reward him? But for a Man to turn his Back, and run away from *God* and *Heaven*, for fear only of being disappointed by some *lewd*, or *covetous*, or *ambitious* Hope, is such an Instance of *vile*, *prostitute* Baseness, as is beneath even Contempt and Derision. For what Danger or Difficulty dares that Wretch encounter, that dares not stand by his *Religion*, in which he confesses all his *future* Hopes are involved, for fear of losing *such* a Place, or being disappointed of *such* a Preferment, which within a *few* Days or Years he knows very well he must lose *for ever*? He who hath a Mind capable of being scared out of his *Religion* by such *mean* Considerations

tions as theſe, is *good* for nothing but only to be made the Foot-Ball of Fortune, to be kicked *up* and *down* upon her *ſcornful* Toe at Pleaſure, who by threatening him with the *ſmalleſt Evil*, can huff him out of the *greateſt Good*, and finding him a *wretched paſſive* Thing that hath not Strength enough to reſiſt her *weakeſt* Impreſſions, makes him her Sport and Recreation, and turns him into any Thing, and toſſes him whither ſhe pleaſes; from *Truth* to *Falſhood*, from *God* to the *Devil*, and from *Heaven* to *Hell*, without the *leaſt* Controul or Oppoſition. For the *poor* Man's Soul is grown ſo *tender* and *effeminate*, that for the *greateſt* Good in all the World, he cannot endure the *leaſt* Air of Suffering to blow upon him: Tell him of Suffering for *Righteouſneſs Sake*, and the very Thought of it frights and appales him. Preſent but a Perſecution at his Breaſt, and bid him ſtand and deliver, and the *creſt-fallen* Poltroon is preſently ready to cry out, *O ſpare my Life, ſpare my Skin! And take my Religion, take my God, and all my Hopes of Heaven and Immortality.* And who but an *infamous* Coward, would ever endure to be hectored out of ſo *vaſt* a Good by the *weak* and *impotent* Evils of this World; which if they do their *worſt*, can only rob him of a *few tranſitory* Enjoyments, which without their Conſtraint he muſt ere long take his leave of *for ever?* How ridiculouſly *mean-ſpirited* would it be for a Man to deliver *up* his Purſe to a Thief, who he knows hath no *other*

Weapon but a *slender* Switch to hurt and offend him? But for a Man to deliver *up* his *Religion*, and with that his *God* and his *Heaven*, at the Demand of a *short Skin-deep* Affliction: which can only disease him for a *few* Moments, and shall then determine in *everlasting* Pleasure and Delight, is a thousand times more *mean* and *ridiculous*.

5. and *lastly*, Consider the *vast* Hazard and Insecurity of a Man's parting with his *Religion* in Compliance with his *vicious* Affections: For that which moves him to it is only his Prospect of living at Ease a *few* Years longer, or gratifying some *covetous* Desire or Ambition; but whether he obtain these Ends by parting with his *Religion*, is vastly *hazardous* and *insecure*. Perhaps when I have acted this *impious* and *perfidious* Part, I may be cast into such Circumstances, as may force me upon *impartial* Reflections, and make me see, whether I will or no, the Blackness and Infamy of my Revolt and Apostacy; which if it should happen, would inevitably raise such a Swarm of Horrors in my Conscience, and cast me into such Agonies and Convulsions of Soul, as will render me a *Hell* and a *Devil* to myself, and give me a thousand times more Pain and Uneasiness than all those *temporal* Evils could have done, for fear of which I ran away from my *Religion*. And if to shun *Poverty*, I should throw myself into *Desperation*; if to avoid a *Prison*, which to an *innocent* Mind with a *righteous* Cause can make a *Heaven* upon Earth, I should cast myself into a *Hell* upon

upon Earth; if to keep in a *whole* Skin, I ſhould bring upon myſelf the *intolerable* Anguiſh of a *wounded* Spirit; if to eſcape being *rejected*, *diſgraced*, and *diſcountenanced* by Men, I ſhould expoſe myſelf to the *perpetual* Clamour and Reproaches of *my own* Conſcience: If theſe Things, I ſay, ſhould happen, as it's very *probable* they may, I ſhall find myſelf miſerably diſappointed of that Eaſe and *quiet* Enjoyment, for the Sake of which I baſely abandoned my *Religion*; I ſhall find that to ſave my Garments from being ſinged, I have thrown my Body into a *conſuming* Flame, and only expoſed my Breaſt to ſave my Buckler. But then ſuppoſe this ſhould not happen, ſuppoſe my Conſcience ſhould be *ſtupid* and *inſenſible* enough to bear the Guilt of my Apoſtacy without Remorſe or Relenting; yet my Proſpect of Gain and Advancement in this World, is extremely *hazardous* and *inſecure*. For it is a thouſand to one, but they to whoſe *Religion* I turn, and upon whoſe Favour I depend, will by *one* Means or *other* diſcover my Falſhood and Inſincerity, and if by the Courſe of my Actions, or any other *ſuſpicious* Indication, they ſhould find Cauſe to be *jealous* that I embraced their *Religion* only to ſerve my Intereſt, and againſt the Perſuaſion of *my own* Mind; if they are *wiſe* they will treat me as a *dangerous* Perſon, upon whom there is no Reliance: For how can they imagine that I ſhould be *true* to them, who have been *falſe* to my *Religion?* It is a *Proverb* among

the *Jews*, *That Proselytes are not to be trusted to the tenth Generation*; and by *too* many *woeful* Instances in *our own* Neighbourhood, we find it a Maxim in some Mens Politicks, That a *new Convert* is no more to be trusted than an *old Heretick*. And though for a while they may think fit to use me as a *proper* Tool to serve a *present* Design, yet to be sure they will use me no longer than they needs must; and when I have done their Work, I must expect to be thrust out, to make Room for such as they can more safely depend on, And if this should not happen, as it is very probable it may; yet seeing all *human* Affairs are liable to *perpetual* Turns and Mutabilities, perhaps upon the *next* Revolution a *contrary* Interest may appear upon the Stage, and then I shall find myself deserted of all my *present* Supports and Dependencies, and like a *forlorn* Wretch, utterly abandoned both by *God* and Men, without any *other* Company to entertain me in this my *mournful* Solitude, besides the *woeful* Remembrances of my Guilt and Shame. To such *infinite* Uncertainties of obtaining their Ends are those *miserable* Men exposed, who desert their *Religion* in Pursuit of their *worldly* Interest. And so I have done with the first Inference: But then,

2. From hence I infer, How *cautious* a Man ought to be in changing his *Religion*, or any Principles of it, lest that which induces him to it be not so much his Conviction as his *profligate* Conscience, I do not pretend

pretend that Men are always to maintain the ſame Perſuaſion in Matters of *Religion*; for ſuch an Obligation would as effectually ſerve the Intereſt of *falſe Religion*, as of *true*. Whatever ſome Men pretend, we are all of us, from *Top* to *Bottom*, a Company of *fallible* Creatures; and if we are in an Error, as it is poſſible we may, it is our Duty to endeavour to be *better* informed. Nor do I deny, but an *honeſt-minded* Man, without being in the leaſt influenced by a *bad Conſcience*, may be innocently, or at leaſt pitiably ſeduced from *Truth* to *Error*, by *falſe* Colours, and *probable* Appearance, for want of *ſufficient* Sagacity to diſtinguiſh between *Sophiſtry* and *true Reaſon*. But if in Compliance with any *vicious* Affection, or in Purſuit of any *worldly* Intereſt, a Man deſerts the Truth, and takes up *falſe* and *erroneous* Principles, his Error is no longer imputable to the *Weakneſs* of his Underſtanding, but to the *Wickedneſs* of his Will; and a *wilful* Error in his Faith will prove as *fatal* and as *damnable* to him, as a *wilful* Wickedneſs in his Manners, and whenever his *wretched* Soul ſhall appear before the *great Searcher of Hearts*, it ſhall certainly be treated by him as a *wilful* Apoſtate, that hath perfidiouſly renounced his *Baptiſmal Vow*, and abjured his *God*, his *Saviour*, *Truth* and *Religion*. And ſeeing it is thus, it very highly concerns Men, as they love themſelves, or have any Regard of their own *everlaſting* Well-Being, not to deſert their *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Motive

than a *thorough* Conviction of its Falshood; not to suffer themselves to be seduced from it by any *temporal* Interest, or *vicious* Affection, lest in so doing they *reprobate* themselves from *God*, and all the *blessed* Hopes of a *glorious Eternity hereafter*. For when Men are upon changing their Persuasions in *Religion*, it is an *ordinary* Thing for their Interests and Passions so to intermingle with their Reasonings, that without some Care and Observation of themselves, they will not be able to discern which of the *two* hath the *greater* Influence upon them; insomuch, that I am very apt to think that there are a great many *careless* and *unreflecting* People, that are hurried merely by their Interest and Passions, out of *one Religious* Persuasion into *another*, who yet, through *gross* Neglect and Inobservance of themselves, believe themselves to be Converts upon *pure* Reason and Conviction. Perhaps upon the Sollicitations of *worldly* Interest, their Minds were wrought into a *strong* Inclination to a Change; insomuch that they vehemently wish that they could but satisfy their Reason and Conscience of the Truth and Reality of that *new* Persuasion, which these their *importunate* Passions so earnestly invite them to embrace; and then with this *strong* Bias of *worldly* Interest upon their Minds, away they run hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince and satisfy themselves; and if in this Heat of Affection they can but light upon any *little* Shew of Probability, that will quickly improve

prove them into *irrefragable* Proofs and Demonſtrations: For when a Man enquires whether ſuch a Doctrine be *true*, with a *ſtrong* Inclination of Will to find it ſo, he will be afraid to conſult the Reaſons and Arguments againſt it, leſt they ſhould convince him that it is *falſe*, and thereby defeat his Inclination. And when once a Man is ſo prepoſſeſſed, as that he will liſten only to *one* ſide of the Queſtion, be that ſide never ſo *abſurd* and *ridiculous*, it is a *hard* Caſe if he cannot find Reaſons enough to wheedle himſelf into the Belief of it; for his very Inclination to believe it will deter him from entering into a *ſtrict* Examination of thoſe Reaſons, and being afraid to examine them *too* far, leſt he ſhould find them *falſe* and *unconcluding*, if he can but diſcern the *leaſt* Colour of Probability in their *firſt* View and Appearance, that will be ſufficient to convince him, and render him a *warm* snd *zealous* Convert: For indeed, the Man was a Convert in his Heart upon Reaſons of *worldly* Intereſt, before ever he thought of thoſe Reaſons of *Religion* that made him a Convert in his Judgment; ſo that 'twas his Intereſt that converted his Affections, and his Affections that converted his Faith; and yet all this while, for want of *Self-Reflection*, the Man imagines that his *new* Faith is wholly owing to the Reaſon and Evidence it carries with it; whereas, would he but impartially conſult himſelf, and take a *little* Pains to review the Steps and Progreſs

Progreſs of his Change, where it began, and how it proceeded and concluded, he would ſoon be forced to acknowledge, that the *firſt* and *fundamental* Reaſon of it was nothing but a *worldly* Intereſt. Wherefore to ſecure you againſt this *dangerous* Piece of *Self-Deluſion*, by which I doubt there are *too* many Men do eternally ruin and deſtroy themſelves, I will endeavour to give you ſome *certain* Signs and Indications by which you may be able to judge, if ever you ſhould be tempted to change your *preſent Religion* or Perſuaſion, whether you do it ſincerely, and upon *pure* Conviction of Mind, or in *mere* Compliance with any *vicious* or *worldly* Affection: And I ſhall give them to you in theſe *following* Queries, which I earneſtly beſeech you ſeriouſly to propoſe to your *own* Souls, whenever any ſuch Temptation ſhall befal you.

1. Whether upon your *firſt* Entrance on the Debate of changing, your Prejudice lie on the ſide of your *preſent Religion*, or of that you are invited to turn to?

2. Whether you have not ſome Diſtaſte in your Affections to your *preſent Religion*, before you entertained any Overtures of changing it?

3. Whether that which gave you *firſt* Inclination to change, was not ſome *temporal* Intereſt?

4. Whether before you entertained any Intention to change, you were fully reſolved to

to conſult impartially on both ſides of the Queſtion?

5. Whether when you *firſt* entered upon this Conſultation, it was your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever ſhall happen to you, to adhere to that ſide which ſhould appear moſt *reaſonable?*

6. and *laſtly*, Whether before you were inclined to change, you did conſcientiouſly comply with the Obligations of *Religion*, and continued to do ſo afterwards?

1. When you fall under any Temptation to change, aſk your *own* Soul whether your Prejudice lie on the ſide of your *preſent* Religion, or of that which you are tempted to turn to? There is no Man that ſincerely profeſſes any *Religion*, but muſt be ſtrongly prejudiced for it, eſpecially if he imbibed it betimes, and was principled in it by his Education; for how can he ſincerely profeſs it, without engaging his Affections towards it, and heartily eſpouſing its Intereſt? For though I confeſs it is a Fault for Men ſo to pre-engage themſelves to any *Religious* Principles, eſpecially ſuch as are not exceeding *clear* and *evident*, (and ſuch are all the *Fundamentals* of *Chriſtianity)* as to ſhut their Ears againſt all *contrary* Reaſons, and obſtinately reſolve never to part with them, or ſo much as to admit into Conſideration any Argument or Evidence againſt them; yet after all it is impoſſible for any *ſincere* Profeſſor of any *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *falſe*, to be

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ſo indifferently *affected* towards it, as not to ſide with it in his Will as well as in his Faith and Judgment; ſo that whenever he is tempted to deſert it, the Temptation muſt neceſſarily find him ſtrongly pre-engaged for it; and unleſs it bring along with it *ſufficient* Evidence not only to convince his Reaſon, but alſo to captivate his Prejudice, it will never be able to prevail. For if ever the Man loved his *Religion*, his Paſſion will contend for it as well as his Reaſon; ſo that all Arguments againſt it, be they never ſo *ſtrong* and *cogent*, will at *firſt* eſpecially find a *difficult* Acceſs to, and an *ungrateful* Reception in his Mind; and though he is ſo overborne by the Strength of the Evidence againſt it that he can no longer forbear *doubting* and *ſuſpecting* it, yet ſtill he is very loth to part with it, and ſtill he wiſhes it were *true*, though he is not able to evince it ſo, till after having endured a *long* Siege of *ſtrong* and *preſſing* Arguments, he is driven at length out of all his Defences, and then his Prejudice yields as well as his Judgment, to ſurrender *up* his *erroneus* Faith to the *prevailing* Power of his Convictions: This is the *natural* Temper of every *ſincere* Profeſſor of any *Religion*. When therefore you are at any Time tempted to change your *Religion*, before you proceed, pauſe a while, and conſider ſeriouſly how you ſtand diſpoſed, and which way your Heart is pre-engaged; whether to the *Religion* you have hitherto profeſſed, or to *that* for which you are invited to change it. Conſult a while with *your own*

Souls

Souls to which ſide of the Queſtion you are moſt inclined to liſten, whether to the ſide which aſſerts your *preſent* Perſuaſion, or to *that* which contradicts and oppoſes it. Obſerve but which Way your Wiſhes and your Paſſions move, whether *for* or *againſt* it, and which Reaſons and Arguments you are moſt concerned for, *thoſe* that oppoſe, or *thoſe* that defend it. For aſſure yourſelves, if the Temptation to change find you *lukewarm* and *indifferent*, or ſo much as *eaſy* and *pliable* to its Propoſals; if it finds you *unaverſe* to admit of a *contrary* Perſuaſion, or *forward* to catch at every Shew of Evidence againſt that *Religion* which you have hitherto profeſſed, or ready to be *ſtaggered* out of it upon the *firſt* Appearance of any Reaſons or Probabilities againſt it; if, I ſay, you find any of theſe *evil* Symptoms upon you when you are *firſt* tempted to change, you have *great Reaſon* to ſuſpect that you are a *falſe Hypocrite* to that Profeſſion which you have hitherto made; that there is ſome *vile* Affection in you that hath got the Aſcendant of your *Religion* and your Conſcience, and that if in this Temper you proceed to a Change, you will be found to be a Convert of your Luſts and not of your Convictions.

2. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, examine whether you have not entertained ſome Diſtaſte to it in your Affections, before you proceed any farther; whether you have not entertained ſome Quarrel againſt it upon the Account of the

the Disturbance it gives you in your *vicious* Delights and Enjoyments; or because it *too* severely exacts of you *universal* Sanctity of Life and Manners, to which of all things in the World your Heart is most averse, and without which the *inflexible* Principles of your *present* Persuasion will not permit you to hope for any Favour from *God*, either *here* or *hereafter*. Consider, whether upon these Accounts your Mind be not cankered with a *secret* Enmity against your *Religion*; whether under those Qualms of Conscience it often gives you, your Heart doth not rise against it, and you do not sometimes secretly wish that you could release your Faith from its *tyrannick* Principles, which give you so much Pain and Disturbance, and submit it to some *gentler Religion* that would permit you to sin in quiet, or at *least* prove more indulgent to your Lusts: For if this be your Temper, you are in very *great* Danger of being betrayed by it into any *false* and *corrupt Religion* that shall be tender'd you in exchange for your own. For if this *other Religion* offer but any *fair* Terms to your *vicious* Affections, or propose but any Expedient how to accommodate the *vexatious* Quarrel between them and your Consciences; if it doth but any way reconcile your Hope of *Heaven* to your *vicious* Manners, by directing you to some *easier* Terms of Salvation than that of forsaking all Unrighteousness, and *worldly* Lusts, *and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present* World; if it will but admit

admit of any Commutation of that *unſufferable* Penance of Godlineſs for *bodily* Exerciſe, of *inward* Mortification for a long Faſt or a *ſound* Whipping, of putting *off* the *Old Man* for putting *on* a *Hair Shirt*, of running the Race of a *holy* Life for a *ſauntering* Pilgrimage, or the like; this is a *Religion* for your Tooth, with which your *naughty* Heart will be ready enough to fall in love upon the *firſt* Interview; and when once it hath gained our Hearts and Affections, if we do not take the *greater* Heed they will quickly gain our Faith and Judgment: For when a Man is *angry* with his own *Religion* becauſe it ſits *uneaſy* on his Conſcience, if a more *eaſy Religion* preſents itſelf to him, he can hardly forbear wiſhing it were *true*, though as yet he hath no Evidence that it is ſo; and then a very *ſlender* Evidence will ſuffice to induce a Belief of the Reality of any thing which a Man earneſtly wiſhes and deſires. If in this *ill* Temper of Mind therefore you ſhould be tempted to change your *Religion*, it concerns you as much as your Souls are worth to look about you; for you have a Seducer in your Breaſt, a *prevalent inſinuating* Seducer, *viz.* ſome *vile* and *ſinful* Affection, who, if you liſten to his charming Perſuaſions, will certainly betray you into a moſt *damnable* Apoſtacy. Wherefore before you proceed to examine the Merits of the Cauſe, conſider ſeriouſly with yourſelves, that *that* Diſturbance which your *preſent Religion* gives to your *vicious* Affections, for which you are

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ſo *angry* with it, is ſo far from being a *juſt* Ground to ſuſpect it, that it is a *real* Evidence of the Truth of it; becauſe it is a *ſenſible* Demonſtration of its Holineſs, which is an *inſeparable* Concomitant of Truth; and therefore for you to deſert it upon this Motive, is in Effect to pronounce it a *falſe Religion*, becauſe it gives you a *ſenſible* Experiment of its Truth and Reality.

3. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, conſider whether that which gave you the *firſt* Inclination to change was not ſome *temporal* Intereſt; whether before ever you admitted any Thought of a Change, you did not perceive *another Religion* appear upon the Stage, attended with all the *fair* Hopes and Advantages of this World, and whether this Proſpect did not *firſt* ſuggeſt to you a *great* Inclination to enter into its Retinue. I do not deny, but that even *worldly* Conſiderations may ſo far influence *honeſt* Minds, as to put them upon a more *ſevere* and *impartial* Scrutiny of their *preſent* Perſuaſions in *Religion*; and unleſs it be in Caſe of *palpable* Truth or Falſhood, it is but *honeſt* Prudence, when a Man's *temporal* Intereſt lies at ſtake, to take Care that he is ſure of his Hand, that he doth not throw it away upon a *falſe* Perſuaſion in a Fit of *blind* Humour or Obſtinacy, and ſacrifice that to an *erroneous* Judgment which he owes to no *other* Altar but Truth's. And indeed before I throw myſelf upon any Suffering, whether it be *Loſs* or *Pain*,

Pain, I am bound in Conſcience diligently to enquire whether it be for *Truth* or *Righteouſneſs ſake*, leſt inſtead of receiving the Crown of Martyrdom, I am ſent away to ſeek my Reward in the *Paradiſe of Fools*. But if merely upon the Conſideration of any *preſent* Loſs or Advantage, I find myſelf ſtrongly inclined to change my *Religion*, before ever I enter into the Merits of the Cauſe, to examine the Reaſons *pro* and *con*, it is a *certain* Sign that *that* Loſs or Advantage that inclines me, hath a more *powerful* Influence upon me than my *Religion*; that I love the World better than *God*, and do prefer my *earthly* Expectations before all my Hopes of *everlaſting* Happineſs. And if in this *ill* Temper of Mind I ſhould be tempted to a *preſent* Change, it concerns me as much as my Soul is worth to be very *careful* what I do; for I ſtand upon the Brink of a Precipice, the *foul* and *fatal* Precipice of Apoſtacy, into which if I fall, I am ruined *for ever*. For if in changing my *Religion*, it be found that I followed this my *wicked* Inclination more than any *ſincere* Conviction, I muſt expect to be treated by *God* as an *Apoſtate* and *Renegado*, as a *wilful* Deſerter of his Cauſe, and Betrayer of his *ſacred* Truth. But if I change while I ſtand thus inclined, it is fearfully *hazardous*, but this will be found to be the Truth of the Caſe; for in all Probability my *wicked* Inclination will caſt a Miſt before my Underſtanding, and ſo darken its Proſpect that it

will hardly be able to diſtinguiſh the *groſſeſt* Sophiſtry from the *cleareſt* Reaſon. So that now thoſe Arguings which before I ſaw thro' with half an Eye, and looked upon as moſt *abſurd* and *ridiculous*, will appear to my *abuſed* and *biaſſed* Mind, in the Colours of *clear* Evidence and *plain* Demonſtration, and I ſhall be ready to ſurrender *up* my Faith to thoſe *trifling* Pretences of Reaſon and Authority, which before I laughed at and deſpiſed: Now, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*, will ſeem a very *pregnant* Proof, that all the *Biſhops of Rome* from St. *Peter*, are ordained the *Supreme Heads* of the *Church*, and the Fountains of all *Eccleſiaſtical* Authority, though they are not ſo much as mentioned in it, no, nor from any Thing that appears, ſo much as thought of. Now, *This is my Body*, looks like a *ſubſtantial* Evidence of the Truth of *Tranſubſtantiation*, and of all thoſe *wild* Abſurdities it contains; though thoſe Forms of Speech, *I am the true Vine*, and *I am the Door*, do as ſubſtantially prove that *Chriſt* bears Grapes, and turns upon Hinges. Now every Thing will appear to me in a quite *different* Guize from what it did before, and I ſhall fancy that I ſpy Demonſtration where before I could only diſcern Probability; for a *good* Sum of Money, or a *rich* Preferment, is a *ſtrange* Clearer of ſome Mens Eyeſight. Thus when a Man begins to think of changing his *Religion* under the *powerful* Influence of his *worldly* Intereſt, that is uſually the only

only *effectual* Reaſon that leads and perſuades him: As for *other* Reaſons, they only ſerve for Form-ſake, to diſguiſe the *foul* Apoſtacy into ſome Reſemblance of a *ſincere* Converſion; for till his Intereſt ſtruck in with them, they ſignified nothing with him, made not the *leaſt* Impreſſion on his Mind; but being backed with that, all on a ſudden they are wondrous *cogent* and *perſuaſive*; from whence it is evident, that they received their Strength and Force from his Intereſt, without the Air of which they are not able to operate; and conſequently that the Change of his Faith is owing to the *over-ruling* Intereſt of his Covetouſneſs and Ambition, and not at all to the Prevalence of Reaſon and *ſincere* Conviction. For 'twas *that* Intereſt that ſtrongly inclined him to change before ever he knew any Reaſon for it, and then it was *that* Inclination that made his Reaſons, and created his Convictions; and let him talk what he pleaſes of *Reaſon*, *Scripture*, and *Authority*; if he was ſtrongly inclined to change before he was moved to it by Reaſon and Evidence, it is plain that the prevailing Motive of his Converſion, was either the Fear of loſing ſome *good warm* Place, or the Hope of gaining ſome *important* Station or Preferment. And if this be found the Truth of his Caſe when he comes to appear before the Tribunal of *God*, it had been a thouſand times *better* for him that he had never been born; for then he will be found a *baſe Deſerter* of his *God*, a *treacherous Judas* to his *Saviour*, and a *perfidious Renegado*

gado from his *Religion*, and according to the Quality of his Sin and Guilt, receive his Portion of Damnation.

4. Consider whether before you entertained any Intention to change, you were fully resolved impartially to consult both sides of the Question. I doubt there are *too* many among us that *first* resolve to change their *Religion*, and then begin to enquire after Reasons and Arguments against it, and that their Resolution to change is so far from being the Effect of *sincere* Conviction, that their Conviction is the Effect of their Resolution, *First*, Some *vile* Affection, or some *temporal* Interest, recommends another *Religion* to them, that either gives them Leave to be *wicked* without Remorse or Disturbance, or promises them Gain and Advancement; upon which they resolve *right* or *wrong* to entertain and embrace it; and then to excuse themselves to their own Consciences, or to vindicate their Reputation to the World from the Scandal of being *downright* Apostates, they fall a hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince themselves of the Truth of it, or at least to make the World believe, that it was not their Interest but their Conviction that turned them. And when Men thus resolve *first*, and enquire *afterwards*, to be sure their Enquiry will be very *partial*; for being fully resolved to change their *Religion* upon some *vicious* or *secular* Motive, it is become their Interest to pick Holes in it, and to reason or cavil themselves out of the Belief of it. And this makes them shy of bringing the

the Matter under a *fair* and *impartial* Examination, leſt while they are ſeeking Reaſons to overthrow their Faith, they ſhould find Reaſon to eſtabliſh and confirm it. So that they begin their Enquiry with theſe ſecret Intentions; *We will liſten only to one ſide of the Cauſe, and leave the other to ſhift for itſelf: and ſeek for as many Arguments as we can againſt our Religion, but none for it. We will read the Books and conſult the Teachers of one ſide only*, viz. *the oppoſite ſide to our preſent Belief and Perſuaſion, and if among them we can but find Arguments enough to render the contrary Perſuaſion any way probable, we will ſubmit our Faith to it without any farther Enquiry, and not trouble ourſelves to examine the Evidence on the other ſide, for Fear we ſhould be convinced in Spight of our Teeth that the Truth lies there; and then our Conſcience will never let us be quiet, but be perpetually clamouring againſt us for baſe and impious Apoſtates.* That this is the *foul* and *hypocritical* Intention of *too* many among us, is *notorious* enough by their Practice; they leap from *Church* to *Church*, and from *one* Communion to *another*, without any Pauſe or Conſideration; they are with us to *Day*, and gone from us to *Morrow*, and are ſuch *Muſhroom*, *extemporary* Converts, that before ever we hear they doubted of their *own*, they are confirmed in a *contrary Religion*. In ſhort, they ſteal out of their *Religion* ſo ſoftly, and with ſo *little* Noiſe, that they are commonly gone before ever we

hear they are going, as if they were afraid we ſhould ſtop and detain them by *better* Reaſons and *fuller* Convictions. Whereas had theſe Men any Conſcience or Honeſty in them, they would conſider, that *Religion* is a Thing *too ſacred* and *ſerious* to be thus dallied and trifled with, and that to change one's *Religion* is a Matter of ſuch *vaſt* Importance, as requires a *long* and *thorough* Conſideration, and a very *clear* and *full* Conviction of Mind; and there is *too* much depends upon it to part with it upon *ſlight* Pretences, and that it concerns them as much as an *Eternity* of Bliſs amounts to, not to deſert it upon any *other* Inducement but that of a *thorough*, *well-weighed* Perſuaſion of Conſcience. And if they had *had* any ſuch *honeſt* Thoughts about them while they were under the Temptation to change, they would never have admitted any Doubt of their *Religion*, but upon *great* and *palpable* Evidence; and then they would have doubted long before they would have concluded againſt it, and not have precipitated their Judgment *hand over-head* into a *contrary* Perſuaſion, till they had *firſt* applied themſelves for Reſolution again and again to their *old* Guides, and Paſtors, and with all *due* Deference to their Authority, had ſtrictly examined all their Reaſons and Anſwers, 'till they had thoroughly inſpected their Arguments *pro* and *con*, and equally heard both ſides of the Cauſe? 'till they had read, adviſed, and conſulted on both ſides, and weighed the whole Matter *over* and *over* with the *greateſt* Care

Care and Exactneſs. But when Men run away from their *Religion* in an Inſtant, without ever obſerving this *regular* Proceſs of *ſincere* Enquiries, it is a *plain* Caſe that their Wills were reſolved before their Underſtandings, and that they were converted before ever they were convinced; and conſequently that it was not Reaſon and Conviction that turned them, but Luſt or Intereſt: For though when they are turned they may perhaps be very *diligent* to ſeek Conviction, yet this is only an After-Game which they are fain to play to ſave their Conſcience or their Reputation.

3. Conſider before you entertain any Intention to change, Whether it be your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever ſhall happen to you, to adhere to that ſide which ſhall appear moſt *reaſonable*. Perhaps you are not yet arrived to that Height of Impiety as to reſolve *right* or *wrong* to change your *Religion*, whether you find it *true* or *falſe* upon a *juſt* and *fair* Examination; for this is ſuch an *horrible* Defiance of *God*, ſuch an *expreſs* and *abſolute* Renunciation of all that is *ſacred* and *good*, as no Man can be guilty of who is not utterly abandoned of all his *natural* Senſe of *Religion*, and Reliſh of *Good* and *Evil*. But yet perhaps you may be tempted to change with the Proſpect of ſuch Advantages on the *one* ſide, and Calamities on the *other*, which though it doth not obtain of you that *baſe* and *wicked* Reſolution, yet doth ſo far prevail, as to engage you upon a *freſh* Enquiry, to try whether upon *ſecond* Thoughts

and *better* Conſideration you can ſatisfy your own Minds of the Truth of that *Religion* you are invited to turn to, that ſo you may, if poſſible, comply with a *good* Conſcience, and ſecure your Intereſt in doing your Duty. And thus far you are ſafe enough; but before you proceed any farther, it concerns you, as you tender your *everlaſting* Intereſt, to look into your *own* Souls, and conſider ſeriouſly whether you are unfeignedly reſolved, whatſoever the Conſequence of Things may be, to cleave faſt to the Truth of *God* on which ſide ſoever you ſhall find it. Put the Queſtion to yourſelves over and over, *O my Soul, here are ſuch Advantages, and ſuch Calamities before you, importuning you to change your preſent diſcountenanced Religion for a more thriving and proſperous one: Are you now reſolved fairly and impartially to examine the Merit of the Cauſe?* And if thereupon you ſtill find Reaſon to believe that your *preſent Religion* is the very Truth of *Jeſus*, will you rather renounce *thoſe* Advantages and incur *thoſe* Calamities than forego it? Will you follow the Truth whereſoever you find it, and whitherſoever it ſhall happen to lead you, though it be from Preferment to Perſecution? Are you reſolved by the Grace of *God* to proſtrate all your *temporal* Hopes and Fears before it, and rather to loſe any *Good* or ſuffer any *Evil* than deſert it? For let me tell you, if you find your Heart ſhrink at this Propoſal, or that you have any *reſerved* Intention, if the worſt come to the worſt, rather to part with your *Religion* right or wrong, than to ſhake Hands with your *temporal*

temporal Intereſt, you are in a very *unfitting* Temper to examine on which ſide the Truth lies. For it is a *plain* Caſe, your Mind is under a *prevailing* Biaſs of *temporal* Hopes and Fears, which will be ſure to incline it to favour that ſide of the Queſtion which is moſt for your Intereſt, and 'twill be impoſſible for you to examine fairly and judge impartially whilſt your Judgment is thus bribed and corrupted by your Intereſt. For your Will hath already determin'd upon the Matter before ever your Underſtanding hath heard the Cauſe, and it is your *ſecret* Intention, right or wrong, to forego your *Religion* rather than your Intereſt, if ever they come in competition. So that now you will be obliged, in your *own* Defence, to uſe your *utmoſt* Art to ſet the *faireſt Colours* upon the Evidences againſt your *Religion*, and to ſtifle and enervate thoſe that aſſert and maintain it, leſt they ſhould ſo confirm you in the Belief of it, as that when Occaſion requires, you will not be able to ſurrender it *up* without committing an *horrible* Outrage and Violence upon yourſelves. Wherefore, before you ſuffer your *worldly* Hopes and Fears to ſummon your *Religion* upon a *new* Trial, be ſure you fix this Reſolution in your Souls; *By the Grace of God I will now lay aſide all Intereſt and Affection, and ſtrictly examine the Evidence on both ſides with an equal and unbiaſſed Judgment. I will attend to nothing but the Reaſons of Things, and the pure Merits of the Cauſe; and wherever I find the Truth lies, whether on the ſide of my Intereſt or againſt it, I will be ſure to follow it, whatſoever ſhall be the Event and Iſſue.* For if upon

upon the Temptation of any *worldly* Intereſt, you bring your *Religion* to a *new* Trial with this *ſecret* Intention, that though it ſhould ſtill approve itſelf to your Judgment, yet you will rather part with it than abandon *that* Intereſt, this very Intention will be apt to blind and miſlead your Judgment to arm your Wit and Reaſon againſt your *Religion*, and to ſet all your Faculties at work to argue you out of it, and pervert you from it to a *contrary* Faith and Perſuaſion; which if it ſhould accompliſh, you will certainly be found *guilty* of a *wilful* Apoſtacy when you come to be tried before the Tribunal of *God*, to whoſe *all-ſeeing* Eye the moſt *ſecret* Motions of your Souls are as *viſible* as if they were written on your Foreheads with a Sun Beam, who ſees your *treacherous* Heart, and *falſe* Intention, rather to forſake his Truth than your Intereſt, and knows very well that it is this that ſeduces you, and gives Force to thoſe *falſe* Reaſons and Convictions that impoſe upon your Judgment, and betray your Faith.

6, and *laſtly*, When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, conſider whether before you were inclined to change you did conſcientiouſly comply with the Obligations of it. We have *too many* Men that pretend to be mighty *inquiſitive* after the *true Church* and the *true Religion*, and yet live as if there were no ſuch thing as *true Religion* in the World, and quietly allow themſelves in ſuch *impious* Courſes as do openly affront the *common* Principles of all Religions. There is nothing

they

they dread ſo much as *Hereſy*, and, if you will believe them, are monſtrouſly concerned to examine whether the *Church* with which they now communicate be *Catholick*, or *Heretical*; and yet all this while they perſiſt, without any Concern or Remorſe, in the moſt *damnable Hereſy* in the World, and that is, a *wicked* and *immoral* Life. So that upon comparing their *Atheiſtical* Lives with the *loud* Cry they make about the *true Catholick Faith* and *Church*, one would be tempted to think that their *Chriſtianity* began at the *wrong* End of their *Creed*, and that they believed in the *Holy Catholick Church* before they believe *in God the Father Almighty*, or in *Jeſus Chriſt his only Son our Lord*; which is ſuch a *groſs* and *fulſome* Piece of Hypocriſy, as one would think any *modeſt* Man ſhould be aſhamed of. For in the Name of *God*, Sirs, What have you to do to wrangle and make a Noiſe about *Religion*, whoſe *profligate* Manners are a Shame and Scandal to *common* Humanity? It is a Reproach to any *Religion* for *you* to name it, and Shame to any *Church* for *you* to pretend to it; and therefore, when ſuch as *you* raiſe a Cry after the *true Church* and *true Religion*, it is a *plain* Caſe, that whatever Pretence you bring upon the Stage, you are prompted by ſome *baſe* Intereſt behind the Curtain. And is it not a *pleaſant* thing to hear ſuch *Profligates* as theſe pretend to be *Converts*, who only turn from *one* Opinion to *another*, but ſtill continue as *wicked* and *unreformed* in their Manners under the Opinion they turn to, as they were under *that* they turned from? Theſe are ſuch Con-

Converts, as there is no *Church* in the World that advances *true* Piety above *worldly* Interest, but would glory to lose, and blush to gain: And what *Diogenes* said of a *wicked* Fellow that praised him, that the *Religion* may say which those Men turn to, *What Hurt have I done, what wicked Principles am I guilty of, that such vile Wretches as these should commend and embrace me?* For, for God's sake, what is it that they are converted to? Is it to any thing that renders them *wiser* or *better* Men? No, the contrary is *too notorious* through the whole Course of their Actions. Well then, it seems they are converted to something that doth them no manner of Good, that serves them to no *true* End of *Religion*, that is, to a *mere empty* Notion that only gingles about their Understandings, but hath no *good* Influence on their Hearts and Manners. Had their Conversion proceeded upon *pure* Principles of Conscience, that would have obliged them to change their Manners as well as their Opinions; there being very *few* Opinions in *Religion* so *contradictory* to the *natural* Sentiments of Conscience as a *vicious* and *immoral* Life. Supposing that the *Papal Supremacy*, *Purgatory*, and *Transubstantiation*, were true, yet that the *contrary* Doctrine to these are Errors, can never be so evident to any Man's Conscience, as that *Drunkenness*, *Adultery*, *Fraud*, and *Oppression*, are Sins; and therefore, for any Man to pretend that he forsook *those* Errors out of Conscience, who yet makes no Conscience of continuing in *these* Sins, is such a *transparent* Hypocrisy as hath not Vizor and Disguise

Diſguiſe enough to abuſe either the moſt *Candid* or *Credulous*. If therefore, before you are reſolved to forſake your Sins, you are tempted to forſake your *Religion*, it is a *plain* Caſe that it is not your Conſcience or Conviction that tempts you, but your Luſt or Intereſt. Had it been Conſcience, it would have been far more *importunate* with you to reform your Manners than your Faith, and to become *good* Men than *Catholick Believers*; and therefore under your *preſent* Circumſtances you ought to be very *careful* what you do, and how you comply with the Temptation, leſt to all the reſt of your Sins you add that *foul* and *fatal* one of Apoſtacy, and thereby fill up the Meaſure of your Iniquities, and *finally* provoke *Almighty God* to abandon you as you have abandoned him, and give you up for *loſt* and *deſperate*.

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